

**The Faction Paradox Protocols,
Volume Five:
"Movers"**

by
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CHARACTER NOTES: THE PRESENT

MAIN CHARACTERS

1. Justine. In the present, she's much like she was in Volumes Three and Four. This is the "tough" version of Justine we're hearing, the one who's been through the apocalypse and can occasionally be prone to violence, although she's still civilised and still has a lot of her old Victorian formality. You might recall that she was put in prison at the end of Volume Four, so she isn't going to be in a particularly good mood here.

2. Shuncucker. Ah yes. Shuncucker is Justine's "darker half" for this story: like Justine she also believes herself to be the messiah and protector of Faction Paradox, but the responsibility's obviously been too much for her, because Shuncucker really isn't remotely stable. Reckless, erratic, aggressive and often impossible to understand, the key to understanding Shuncucker is - in short - that she seems permanently pissed. It's not clear whether she really *is* off her face (possibly the only way she knows of dealing with things?), or whether she's got some kind of neural damage that gives her a permanent slur and/ or hangover. Which might seem quite entertaining, if it weren't for the fact that she's incredibly dangerous and nobody ever knows which way she's going to jump. (In effect she's like a psychotic, heavily-armed version of Bernard Black... if anyone understands what I mean by that.) Her habit of going "hah!" at sporadic intervals really should be quite alarming.

3. First Ordinary Selvynkesh. One of two members of staff at the prison facility. Veeble and Selvynkesh are basically the Shakespearean grave-diggers of the piece, two ordinary menial-workers who get caught up in bigger events, although frankly it'd be better if they *weren't* just comedy Cockneys. Selvynkesh is the older, more experienced and more serious-

minded member of the pair, probably better-educated than his colleague and with a greater tendency towards brooding.

4. Second Ordinary Veeble. Selvynkesh's colleague in the prison hasn't been doing the job for long, and has a habit of treating the job quite casually. You can't imagine him doing up the buttons on his uniform properly. Probably turns up for work in a pony-tail. Lower-middle-class rather than a real working-class boy.

5. Demetra Kine. The villainess of the piece, although she's not a villain in the sneering, sadistic sense of the term (i.e. she's not like Lolita from the previous Volumes). Demetra is quiet, controlled, determined and most of all *professional*: she comes from a culture in which assassination's an everyday event and empire-building's a way of life, so as a leading member of a self-made semi-aristocratic family she knows about being clinical and detached. Actually you could say she's a lot like Michael Corleone, but in fact the closest historical parallel is probably Lucretia Borgia. She always speaks in a slow, measured fashion, and what's most notable is that she's always so *reasonable*, even when the things she's saying seem bizarre or unacceptable. The underlying sense is that she might, if treated properly, be an ally instead of an enemy. (A point worth mentioning here: occasionally Demetra will use non-English words to refer to things from her own culture. In line with the "Borgias" feel, *all* of these words should sound vaguely Italian, although for clarity's sake I've generally used the letter "é" to indicate an "ay" ending on certain words... it might *look* French, but it shouldn't sound that way.)

6. Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith is essentially a librarian, whose job is to tend to the numerous texts and files stored in the prison facility. What's striking about him, though, is the fact that he's a minotaur. He's a big, powerful, hairy being with the head of a bull, something which doesn't stop him wearing well-tailored clothes and a monocle. He is, as minotaurs go, rather civilised. As you'd expect from a creature that size, he has a deep, rolling voice, but it's not that loud because... well, he works in a library. The important thing to remember about Mr. Smith is that even if he's talking

about the lesser-known works of Marcel Proust, he still sounds like he's *lowing* all the time.

SMALLER PARTS

1b. Mandeema. Demetra's servant and bodyguard, Mandeema is seven feet tall, covered in tattoos and mostly just provides the muscle. What's most notable about Mandeema is that she's incapable of normal speech, and has a metal grill set into her throat: everything she says comes out as a rasping, electronic *noise*, like someone whose vocal cords have been scraped raw and then fed through a stylophone. It doesn't sound pretty.

2b. Colonel Rendermann. Only gets a few lines. Another prisoner at the facility, Rendermann is a war criminal who sounds a lot like a female Heinrich Himmler. There's no German accent, but other than that she's pretty much a bog-standard fascist officer.

CHARACTER NOTES: THE PAST

MAIN CHARACTERS

1. Justine. The sixteen-year-old version of Justine is obviously a lot less hardened than the "current" version, especially as we're hearing her before she's seen any kind of action and before she first comes into contact with Faction Paradox. As a teenager she's a lot less confident than the character we're used to, but this *doesn't* mean she spends the whole time simpering: since she was brought up in the late nineteenth century, her "submissiveness" (by later standards, anyway) takes the form of a polite formality rather than real nervousness. Which is to say, she calls everyone "sir" without thinking about it but doesn't seem to be genuinely scared of them.

2. Emma. Justine's friend/ associate/ sidekick in 1899, Emma is also sixteen years old and on the surface appears to be the confident one of the pair. She's evidently a lot more reckless than Justine, an upper-middle-class small-town girl who probably knows a lot more about boys than her friend does. (It's telling to compare Justine's relationship with Emma to her later relationship with Eliza: like Eliza, Emma acts casual while Justine's stiffly formal, but unlike Eliza it's Emma who tends to take the lead. Faced with trouble, though, Emma probably isn't going to be able to deal with it while Justine almost certainly is.)

3. Godfather Morlock. Yes, he's back. Here he's exactly as he was in Volumes One and Two, a man who sounds like a mutant hybrid of Henry the Eighth and Isaac Newton. He still has a tendency to irritate his colleagues in Faction Paradox, and he still doesn't really care.

4. Godfather Sabbath. As we've already established, Godfather Sabbath is *not* the same person as Sabbath (from Volumes Three and Four), so they really shouldn't be played by the same actor. Godfather Sabbath is one of Morlock's contemporaries in the Faction, but while Morlock can be flippant, eccentric and at times incomprehensible, Sabbath is blunt, hard-nosed and impatient, a man who clearly doesn't feel he has time to waste on frivolities of any kind. He's not *evil*, and he certainly doesn't sound like a pure villain, but he's certainly capable of aggression (he's actually the head of the Faction's military resources, so he sees everything in terms of tactics and gets irritated when things don't work the way they're supposed to). He's middle-aged, probably a little younger than Morlock.

5. Aunt Fiora. A relative of Emma's. Fiora is only in her early forties, but she's often treated as if she were much older, for two reasons. One: she's a widow, and in the nineteenth century that gives her the same kind of social role as a woman of seventy. Two: the way she talks. She has some kind of dysfunction of the throat, probably a cancer, which means that although she's perfectly coherent she speaks in a gasping, grating fashion which must make a lot of people treat her like a woman at death's door. She is, however, still capable of using a dry wit against anybody who tries to talk down to her. (The idea here is that there's something fundamentally

witch-like about Aunt Fiora. In many ways she's the strange old woman who lives in the cottage, but this is the nineteenth century - *not* medieval Europe - so there's a hint of fairy-story even though the setting's a historical one.) If at all possible, then it'd be good if Fiora could be played by the same actress who usually plays Eliza.

SMALLER PARTS

5b. Eliza. (Actually in the present, but she's part of the "past" recording block.) Exactly as we last heard her in Volume Four, although here she only turns up in cameo at the end of the story.

6b. The Reverend. The local priest in Justine's home town, 1899. The Reverend is a pompous and rather aggressive man in late middle age, the kind of hard-core nineteenth-century Christian who probably wishes that public stoning was still an option.

Pre-Credits Sequence

F/X: Fade in to the sound of church organ music, something suitably slow and dreary but fortunately just coming to an end. The church background (and inevitable echo) stays with us throughout the next scene, as the Reverend addresses his congregation.

REVEREND [typically overblown]: One-hundred and twenty-five years.

F/X: He pauses to let that sink in. There may be the odd quiet cough from the congregation, but that's about all.

REVEREND: It was in the year of our Lord seventeen-hundred and seventy-four that Sir Paul Rothery set down the roots of this community. One-hundred and twenty-five years since he laid the first stone of the first church to stand on this site, upon ground which - and I'm sure none of us need to be reminded of the historical details - had never before known Christian worship. **[Pause for gravitas.]** There's a great deal of history, buried in the vaults of this institution. A history which tells of a triumph of goodness, decency and the love of Christ over black superstition and occultism. It's a pity, then, that not *every* member of the modern community shares the same respect for our heritage.

F/X: He obviously thinks this is an important point. Again, there's just the odd shuffle from the audience.

REVEREND: Some days ago, a young lady of this parish asked me - and I can only assume that she believed she was being in some way amusing - whether there happens to be such a thing as a "monster" in these vaults. She'd been inspired, it seems, by tales of the unfortunate practises which took place here before the present century. She even went as far as to

inquire whether the church was perhaps concealing some sort of mythical beast, and if so whether it "fed on the flesh of local virgins".

F/X: From the back of the church, there's a single muffled snigger from one of the younger churchgoers. Nobody else reacts.

REVEREND: You may well be tempted to laugh. But the fact of the matter is this. As long as we indulge in such frivolous legends, we forget a very real, and very simple truth. There *are* monstrous forces in this world. They move invisibly around us, but they are no less dangerous because of it. They tempt us. Mislead us. Unseen, they move us in ways which are as insidious as they are subtle. **[Takes on a lower, heavier tone.]** I speak, of course, of the armies of Satan. And it may not be "fashionable" or "popular" to speak of such things directly, but such thoughts are *not* to be treated as if they were stories for children.

F/X: The Reverend turns a few pages of the book on the altar in front of him.

REVEREND [lighter again]: It's Matthew who can be considered our authority in these matters. First, however, I'd ask the congregation to rise and sing hymn number eleven: "Give Us This Day, O God Almighty".

F/X: More organ music, the introduction to a hymn, as the congregation stands. Luckily the scene fades out before they can start to sing.

Fade into...

F/X: Exterior background, probably somewhere quiet rural. There are birds chattering overhead, suggesting fresh air and sunshine. In fact we're outside the church as the congregation leaves the building, so we can hear the sound of polite mumbling, local parishioners going through the motions of greeting each other. After a few moments, we hear a single voice over the background.

EMMA [hisses]: Justine!

JUSTINE [formally]: Emma.

EMMA [hisses]: Over here.

F/X: A shift in the positions of the two characters, to suggest that they're now both standing together in the "foreground".

EMMA: I don't want Mrs. Ringwood to see me. She keeps telling my parents that I'm giving her **[haughty voice]** "improper looks".

JUSTINE: And are you?

EMMA: *I* don't want to look at her. She's a big-nosed trout. Where's your stepmother?

JUSTINE: She's not well this morning. Or at least... she *says* she's not well.

EMMA: I bet she's been drunk again.

JUSTINE: Emma!

EMMA: It's true! She's *always* drunk after a Saturday.

JUSTINE: I think she's... sick. **[She says it in a way that makes it sound like a euphemism for something.]**

EMMA: Especially in her liver. Did *she* make you wear that?

JUSTINE: It was the only clean dress I had.

EMMA: You look like you're going to a funeral. She's even trying to make you dress like a Protestant. I bet she cuts off all your hair next.

JUSTINE: Emma -

EMMA: Well, she's an old trollop.

JUSTINE: Emma, *shh!*

REVEREND [approaching]: Miss James. Miss McManus.

EMMA [realising what Justine meant]: Oh! Reverend.

REVEREND [somewhat severely]: I trust, Miss James, that today's sermon answered any questions you might have about the history of our community?

EMMA [trying to keep a straight face]: Yes, Reverend. Thankyou, Reverend.

REVEREND [after a pause]: Hmm.

F/X: There's a slight gap, filled with nothing but background noise, as the girls wait for the Reverend to walk away again.

EMMA [quietly]: Kiss my arse, Reverend.

JUSTINE: Emma... was it *you* who asked him about keeping a monster?

EMMA: I was only teasing him.

JUSTINE: I don't think priests like being teased.

EMMA: He doesn't like *me*, either. He doesn't like *any* of my family.

JUSTINE: No. Where *are* your parents?

EMMA: They went home. I told them I was going to visit Aunt Fiora.

JUSTINE: And are you?

EMMA: Might do. I'm going over to Geddis Fields. D'you want to come? Annie Docherty said there were horses in the Fields this morning. All saddled up and covered in riding-colours. She said it looked like a hunt.

JUSTINE: I don't think so. Lord Pelbrook wouldn't allow a hunt on a Sunday, would he?

EMMA: Maybe they're doing it without him knowing. **[With drama.]** Maybe they're dangerous anarchists. Or foreign agitators.

JUSTINE: I don't know. I think it's going to rain.

EMMA: It's not going to rain! There wouldn't be so many birds, if it was going to rain.

JUSTINE: Just a feeling. There's something about the air today...

F/X: There is indeed something about the air, and it doesn't sound as though it quite belongs here. It's the sound of someone talking, but it's almost like listening to distant thunder: as if the voice comes from somewhere up in the sky, so from here it can only be heard as a vague echo. Then it's gone again.

JUSTINE: ...can you hear that?

EMMA: Hear what?

JUSTINE: I thought... **[distracted]** ...it was just for a moment...

EMMA [not entirely serious]: Maybe you can hear rainclouds. Like Red Indians can. Come on, let's go and see the hunters. If they're *very* dangerous, maybe they'll even take us for a ride.

JUSTINE: Even so. I'm not sure I want to meet your aunt.

EMMA: She's *your* relative as well. Well, nearly. Anyway, it's better than going back to your stepmother's house.

JUSTINE: Yes. Yes, that's true.

F/X: The sound in the sky again. It's still too vague to make out in detail, but just for a moment it sounds a lot like a male voice. (In fact - although there's no way the listener could know this yet - it's a snatch of Veeble's dialogue from the next scene, but muffled and distorted so that we can't make out the words. All of this will make sense in time.) Here there may also be a hint of a low and distant throbbing, actually the background F/X of the next scene "leaking" into this one.

EMMA [moving away]: Justine?

JUSTINE: I heard it again...

F/X: Once again we hear the voice from up above, but louder this time, so loud that we can tell it's definitely a man even if we can't make out the words. But the background sound of mumbling churchgoers doesn't change. The far-away throbbing gets closer, and closer, so it's not unlike listening to Justine's heartbeat as she starts to panic.

JUSTINE: Emma?

F/X: Emma speaks, but now *her* voice seems distorted and not-quite-real. The throbbing has become at least as loud as the background noise of the church, as if the two different scenes were running together, so we can hear both Veeble's voice and an echo of the voices around Justine. Basically, it sounds like the stereo picture's melting.

JUSTINE: Emma, what's happening?

F/X: The throbbing gets louder, and louder, so that Emma and the churchgoers become nothing but echoes.

JUSTINE: Where *am* I?

F/X: As Justine speaks, her voice also becomes distorted. The long, drawn-out echo of it is the last thing we hear before all other sound fades away, and we...

Fade into...

F/X: A low, throbbing, constant hum, the background noise of an environment that's metallic, hi-tech and probably quite claustrophobic. We can hear footsteps throughout most of this scene, suggesting that we're moving along a long passageway, and they're accompanied by a squeaking sound: someone's pushing a trolley. For now, everything's very subdued.

VEEBLE [after a while]: I bet she's a dreamer.

SELVYNKESH: What?

VEEBLE: I bet she's dreaming. Inside the casket.

SELVYNKESH: They don't *all* dream.

VEEBLE: No, but I bet *she* does. Just look at her. That look she's got on her face. All... pensive. She looks like she's trying to remember something.

SELVYNKESH [cynical]: And you don't think that's got anything to do with the fact that her nervous system's wired into a self-repeating time-frame?

VEEBLE: You've got no sense of poetry.

SELVYNKESH: *None* of them used to dream, when I started here. They just used to get frozen.

VEEBLE: Frozen like "frozen in time", or like "frozen in ice"?

SELVYNKESH: Ice. Cryogenics.

VEEBLE: Nice and simple, I s'pose.

SELVYNKESH: It's too easy to break out of cryogenics. War criminals used to fit themselves with secondary nervous systems, just because they knew there was a chance of ending up here.

F/X: Footsteps end. As does the squeaking.

VEEBLE: "Secondary nervous systems"?

SELVYNKESH: Ice-proof ones.

VEEBLE [not really meaning it]: Oh for the good old days. Get the door, will you?

F/X: A metal door slides open, with a muffled hiss. The footsteps and trolley-squeaking continue throughout the next few lines as Veeble and Selvynkesh move through the doorway. If possible we should get the feeling that they've moved into a subtly different area: the background hum is still present, but we may be able to hear a very quiet, very regular beeping sound, as if they've entered a chamber full of monitoring equipment.

VEEBLE: Makes you think, though. She's there in the box, thinking she's... I don't know, wherever she thinks she is. And she's got no idea we're the ones pushing her around. Can't see us, can't hear us. We're like gods, from where she's sitting.

SELVYNKESH: She isn't "sitting" anywhere.

VEEBLE: No, but... you know what I mean. Makes you wonder if there's anyone pushing *us* around.

SELVYNKESH: You mean, apart from the usual?

F/X: Footsteps stop again.

VEEBLE: This one's empty. You start the interment, and I'll do the manifest.

F/X: Throughout this next sequence there's the sound of machinery, but like everything else here it's very low-key, hissing valves rather than clanking gears. It's actually the sound of the casket being mechanically loaded into a space in the wall, so lots of hydraulics would be good.

VEEBLE: Right. **[Formally, but a bit bored.]** Let the record show that the prisoner's casket was installed in alcove seventeen, sixth chamber, second gallery. Time-frame linked into the nervous tissue via convict tattoo on the upper right arm.

SELVYNKESH [mumbling]: The machinery keeps stalling. One of the valves has gone again.

VEEBLE [still formally]: Internee named as Cousin Justine. Affiliation, Faction Paradox. Sentence in perpetuity. **[Less formal.]** Why do they always bother saying that, anyway? They're *all* perpetuity. Nobody's ever letting any of these buggers out, are they?

SELVYNKESH: Formal procedure.

F/X: The machine noises end. Maybe with a satisfying "ka-chunk", to suggest that the casket's in place.

VEEBLE [interested]: Ooh...

SELVYNKESH: What?

VEEBLE: It says here she's carrying "the shadow of the founder of House Paradox". There's an exotic weapons marker and everything.

SELVYNKESH: Does it matter?

VEEBLE: It will if she ever gets out.

SELVYNKESH: Not important. Nothing's getting out of here unless there's a complete security failure.

F/X: The background hum suddenly drops in tone. It's as if the whole system's suddenly powered down. Within seconds it's faded out completely, leaving nothing but the twinkling of the monitoring equipment. There's an awkward silence between the two men.

VEEBLE: What was that?

SELVYNKESH: The power array's switching from one stack to the other. It happens every few months.

VEEBLE: Oh. Sorry, completely misread the situation.

F/X: The same "power down" noise, but in reverse as the systems come back on-line. The background hum returns to normal.

SELVYNKESH: There, you see?

F/X: Footsteps and trolley squeak, as Veeble and Selvynkesh walk away across the chamber. This time we don't go with them, so the following lines fade out into the background. (If you wanted to be particularly flash, you could start fading in the theme music as they vanish into the distance.)

VEEBLE: So... how can you tell a switch in the power stacks from a complete security failure?

SELVYNKESH [sighs... he doesn't think this is worth discussing]:
If there was a failure, there'd be alarms.

VEEBLE: Really?

SELVYNKESH: I should imagine. Also, you can tell when the stacks are switching by the way the lights change.

VEEBLE: What, you mean, the way they go from dark red to *really* dark red?

SELVYNKESH: More or less.

VEEBLE: So if there *was* a failure...

SELVYNKESH: There isn't going to be a failure.

VEEBLE: No, but if there was...

SELVYNKESH: Haven't you got anything better to think about?

F/X: By now the conversation has faded out completely, to be replaced by...

GRAMS: Opening theme music.

Fade into...

F/X: The same kind of exterior background that we heard outside the church, complete with birdsong, but this time without any human voices. The idea here is just to get the sense of a wide open space, a field on a

sunny day, complete with maidens frolicking in the grass. It's all terribly picturesque. When Emma speaks, she's some way in the background.

EMMA [shouting]: Come on! This way!

F/X: Emma comes into the foreground, so we might be able to hear the noise she makes as she runs through the long grass.

EMMA [shouting]: What are you waiting for?

F/X: Justine is following her, less rapidly. Emma's in the foreground by now, and she's stopped moving.

EMMA: Are you all right?

JUSTINE [approaching]: Something's wrong. Something's *different* today.

EMMA: You're even more mad than your stepmother.

JUSTINE: That isn't funny.

F/X: Emma moves off again, so her voice becomes more distant as she moves through the grass. Justine doesn't follow.

EMMA: Maybe you'll end up as mad as Aunt Fiora and marry a Negro.

JUSTINE: Abraham married a Negro. [**Less certain.**] Or an Egyptian. If they're the same thing.

EMMA: Abraham didn't live in a house like Aunt Fiora's. Have you ever *seen* inside her house?

JUSTINE: No. My stepmother didn't think I... she didn't want me to visit. Especially now.

EMMA: Especially now what?

JUSTINE: You know. Your aunt. And Mr. Faraday.

EMMA [stopping a short way away]: That's not true! Well... maybe it's true. *He* says he just gives her teacakes.

JUSTINE: I think the family's just worried.

EMMA: *Everyone's* worried about Aunt Fiora. Reverend Bell hates her even more than he hates monsters.

JUSTINE: He doesn't believe in monsters.

EMMA: I bet he does. I bet he's got one hidden under the church. I bet it lives in a secret maze.

JUSTINE [trying not to laugh]: There isn't a maze under the -

EMMA: I bet he lures young maidens down into the tunnels. Like in the story. **[Pretend "scary" voice.]** And it's waiting down there... in the dark... with all the bones from its victims...

JUSTINE [still nearly giggling]: Stop it.

EMMA: A horrible fiend, half-man and half-animal...

JUSTINE: Emma!

EMMA: Ready to devour the innocent. Or use its horns to charge any handsome young hero who enters its lair.

JUSTINE: You're being silly!

F/X: We're really not going to get the full effect just from the audio, but at least we should be able to hear the sound of a foot stamping on the earth

as Emma starts to make a snorting, growling noise... in other words she's pretending to be a bull, getting ready to charge.

EMMA: *Rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr!*

F/X: Fast, stomping footsteps as Emma charges towards Justine like an animal. There may well be a short squeal from Justine as Emma knocks her off her feet and the two of them fall to the ground. We should get the sense of them rolling around in the grass, in what may or may not be an *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit* sort of way.

JUSTINE [laughing]: This is my only clean dress!

EMMA: It's black. Nobody's going to know the difference.

F/X: More rolling in the grass, but more importantly we become aware of another sound in the distance. It's muted, but it sounds like hooves, a group of horsemen just riding into earshot. There may also be the odd (male) shout, the riders calling to each other, but the noise is only just audible from here. Justine and Emma stop frolicking and prick up their ears.

JUSTINE: Listen...

EMMA: Horses!

F/X: The girls clamber to their feet. Emma moves on a little.

EMMA: Justine, look! Down in the field.

F/X: Justine follows her lead. We get the feeling that they've got a marginally better view from wherever they're now standing, as the sound of the hooves is slightly louder.

EMMA: Annie Docherty was telling the truth. It's a hunt.

F/X: The horses come to a halt in the distance. There's the occasional stomping of hooves, but that's all.

JUSTINE [a little awe, but not much]: Look at them. The two men at the front...

EMMA: Euurr! They're old!

JUSTINE: They're not old. They're only middle-aged. The one with the beard can't be more than forty. Or fifty.

EMMA: That's *much* too old.

JUSTINE: But look at their armour. Why are they wearing armour?

EMMA: The horses are so *big*. [**Calling out.**] Good afternoo-oon!

JUSTINE: Emma, don't...

EMMA: Why not? [**Calling.**] Hello there!

JUSTINE: Come away from the edge -

EMMA [calling]: Are there any *young* men in your party, or are you all... *eoww!*

F/X: Emma trips and falls, so there are bumping noises as she tumbles down what seems to be a slope of some kind. Her surprised squeal is therefore further away from "us" than the rest of her line.

JUSTINE: Emma!

F/X: While Emma comes to a stop at the bottom of the slope, Justine hurries down after her, so heavy footsteps on the earth. Soon they're both in the "foreground" again.

EMMA: Oww. I hurt my foot.

JUSTINE: I told you to stay away from the edge.

EMMA: Are they looking at us? Did they see me fall?

JUSTINE: Is it important?

EMMA [in some discomfort]: I'll look stupid. They'll think I'm simple.

F/X: In the background, we can hear the horses' hooves start up again. They're not moving as quickly this time, but they're closer than they were before, and getting closer by the second.

JUSTINE: They're coming this way. I think they've seen us.

EMMA: No! I don't want them to see me like this!

F/X: The hooves get even closer. They don't stop when we might expect them to, suggesting that the riders are still some way away but that the hooves are louder than we thought. These are *big* horses. There may also be a slightly odd echo on the hooves, but we'll come to that.

JUSTINE [troubled]: We should go...

EMMA: Help me up. Please.

F/X: Now the hooves are not only getting louder, they're starting to become distorted. In fact it's exactly the same effect we heard during the transition from the church scene to the corridor scene, so we're about to move from Justine's dream back into the real world. This means that the hooves are not only likely to be louder than they should be, but also a lot more intimidating, as if everything's suddenly bearing down on her.

JUSTINE: The noise...

EMMA: The horses. They must weight tons.

JUSTINE: No, it's something else, it's...

F/X: The noise continues to distort, so we can hardly tell that it's supposed to be hooves. When Emma speaks again her voice is also distorted, and Justine's the only "normal" thing left in the scene. We can also make out the muffled, echoing sound of a man's voice somewhere in the mix, actually Selvynkesh's dialogue from the next scene, "leaking" into this one.

EMMA: Justine?

JUSTINE: It's happening again...

F/X: The sound reaches its peak, if we can call it that. We can no longer hear Emma's voice over the background, but in the middle of the din there are newer, clearer sounds beginning to emerge. In fact it's the background noise from the next scene, as we...

Fade into...

F/X: The corridors of the prison facility, as in scene A1. However, things are no longer subdued and it sounds like all hell's broken loose. There are voices in the distance, raised voices, as if there's a riot going on. We hear occasional sounds of violence, shots from what might be energy weapons, although so far none of them are close to "us". There might even be the hissing of caskets being disinterred from the walls. Mixed in with this noise we can hear the sound of a voice, being broadcast over what sounds like a public address system.

SELVYNKESH [P.A.]: By order of the... **[Pauses. He's not comfortable saying this.]** By order of the new management... would all escaped convicts please assemble near the control core at the centre of the

facility. **[Pause.]** What? **[Pause. He sounds uncertain, possibly nervous.]** The new management would like to ask *politely* that all escaped convicts should assemble near the control core.

F/X: Over this noise we hear the sound of running. Someone coming this way. He stops once he's close to "us".

VEEBLE [to himself, out of breath]: No alarms. He said there'd be alarms.

F/X: Irregular beeping, the sound of buttons being pressed on a console. It sounds a lot like someone making a call on a touch-tone 'phone.

VEEBLE [hurried]: Come on, come on. Give me access.

F/X: There's a noise from the console. It might be a kind of language, or at least a kind of voice, but it's obviously produced by a machine. It sounds like it's talking in binary.

VEEBLE: Er... this is Second Ordinary Veeble. Is this terminal still working? **[No response.]** Hello?

F/X: The machine answers with what might be a "yes".

VEEBLE: Right. Undo shutdown, service code one-forty-four. Can you do that?

F/X: Another burst of machine-language.

VEEBLE: Good. I want to access prisoner records. No, I want to *search* prisoner records. Search parameters... Faction Paradox affiliation.

F/X: And again. The "speech" is longer this time.

VEEBLE: All right. Which of them is closest?

F/X: Short response.

VEEBLE: Closest to *here*, you stupid machine. This gallery.

F/X: The machine gives him its answer.

VEEBLE: Okay. Alcove five, chamber thirteen. Now... re-initiate shutdown. Same service code.

F/X: The machine starts to babble something incomprehensible, but Veeble cuts it off.

VEEBLE: Just *do* it.

F/X: A short "oh, all right then" kind of reply from the machine. That done, Veeble begins to move again.

VEEBLE [moving away from us]: Alcove five, chamber thirteen. Alcove five, chamber thirteen.

F/X: Fade into one of the facility's chambers, complete with monitoring devices. The sound of rioting seems further away here. Veeble enters at speed, if we can hear footsteps over the hubbub.

VEEBLE: Right. Alcove five.

F/X: Veeble stops moving, and the sound of machinery begins. In fact he's removing one of the caskets from the wall, so it's a lot like the sound we heard in scene A1 when Justine was interred.

VEEBLE: Come *on*...

F/X: The noise of the machinery ends. Instead of a "ka-chunk" noise, this time it ends with a cracking, splintering sound, like something being broken open. The occupant of the casket is being released. There's a long hiss of air as the casket opens.

VEEBLE [still to himself, really]: Wake up. Or... come out of your time-field. Whatever you like. Just *hurry*.

F/X: The hissing fades away. For a few moments there's nothing but the background noise of far-away rioting, before the occupant of the casket begins to wake up. Slowly and painfully.

SHUNCUCKER: *Nnnnn...*

VEEBLE: Hello? Can you hear me?

SHUNCUCKER: *Ahhrrrrrrrr...*

VEEBLE: Please. I need help. I need... protection.

F/X: The occupant of the casket stumbles forward, just a couple of steps. When she speaks she sounds groggy, confused and not entirely happy. (In fact this is perfectly normal for her, but here it's worse than usual.)

SHUNCUCKER: How many people did I kill last night?

VEEBLE: Sorry?

SHUNCUCKER: Must've drunk like a pig. How many people did I kill?

VEEBLE: You... didn't kill anybody.

SHUNCUCKER: *What?*

F/X: Another faltering step from Shuncucker. There's a banging sound, suggesting that she's stumbled and fallen against something.

SHUNCUCKER: Are you saying I'm some kind of lightweight?

VEEBLE: Er...

SHUNCUCKER: Do you know who I am?

VEEBLE: No... not really. The records said you were from Faction Par

-

SHUNCUCKER: Shuncucker. Kresta Ve Coglana Shuncucker. Last scion of the Faction homeworld. Bastard offspring of the Grandfather's fifth lieutenant. Defender of the faith. Killer of... **[fails to make something up off the top of her head, and gets even more irritable]** ...oh, you know. All kinds of things. Don't look at me like that.

VEEBLE: Please. Listen. You're on the prison-world of the Great Houses. You've been hooked up to a neutral time-frame -

SHUNCUCKER [snapping]: I know that! **[Pause.]** Prison-world?

VEEBLE: The Houses put you here. For crimes of... **[not wanting to get on her bad side]** ...well, *I'm* not saying they were crimes, but...

SHUNCUCKER: There was a trial. I remember the trial. God, I murdered them. **[N.B. She says this in the same way someone might say "God, I was pissed".]**

VEEBLE: Murdered them...?

SHUNCUCKER: Those bastards at the trial. Killed the lot of them. I must have done, that's the kind of thing I do.

VEEBLE: But -

SHUNCUCKER: No, not all of them. I probably left one or two. Just so they could tell everyone about it. How many people d'you normally get in a courtroom?

VEEBLE: I don't know. Thirty...?

SHUNCUCKER: That's it. I killed twenty-eight of them, I remember now. Who the hell are you, anyway?

VEEBLE: I just work here. I'm an Ordinary.

SHUNCUCKER: And you want a fight, is that it?

VEEBLE: What? No!

SHUNCUCKER: Prison guard. Lower-class nobody. Thinks that if he lets one of the big guns out of her cell and challenges her to one-on-one combat, that'll make him somebody. Probably thinks that just because she's been hooked to one of these... *machines* for a couple of weeks -

VEEBLE: Actually, you've been here for the last forty -

SHUNCUCKER: - then I won't be up to full strength. Well, that's the last mistake you're ever going to make.

F/X: Shuncucker stumbles forward. There's a "crump" as she falls over onto the floor.

SHUNCUCKER: Ow.

VEEBLE: Your body's still in shock. You might not be able to walk for a few -

SHUNCUCKER: Of course I can walk! Help me up.

VEEBLE: Are you... going to kill me?

SHUNCUCKER: Yes. No. Possibly. Just give me -

F/X: Outside the chamber, the sound of escaping convicts becomes noticeably louder. Someone's coming this way. Probably several someones.

SHUNCUCKER [grunting slightly, as if getting to her feet]: Is that just in my head, or can I hit it?

VEEBLE: Oh, no.

F/X: The convicts sound as if they're right outside the room. We can hear their voices, and their voices aren't necessarily human. They sound... irritable. There might even be the occasional gunshot.

VEEBLE: I'm sorry. I'm sorry, I have to go, I can't let them -

SHUNCUCKER [grabbing him]: Just a minute there.

VEEBLE: They're right outside the -

F/X: The convicts burst into the chamber, gabbling in a non-human dialect, and from here it sounds as if they're all female: the overall feel is one of "alien cannibalistic warrior-women". Before they can do anything, however, they're interrupted by Shuncucker.

SHUNCUCKER [calls out]: Hey! Hey, you!

F/X: The convicts stop moving, somewhat taken aback. They don't fall absolutely silent, but they make vaguely bewildered noises which might be the non-human equivalent of "eh?" and "what?". Their voices are still in the distance, suggesting that the chamber's quite large.

SHUNCUCKER: Stop that. With the shooting and the... **[struggling to find words]** ...that.

F/X: The convicts mumble among themselves, trying to work out what to make of this. At this distance we can't make out the words.

SHUNCUCKER: That's right. I'm talking to this man. And if anyone's going to kill him for being a pain in the arse, then it's going to be me. Is that clear?

F/X: The convicts come to a decision. And then one of them opens fire.

SHUNCUCKER: Oww!

F/X: The other convicts follow the lead of the first, and they're all shooting in Shuncucker's direction. Throughout this next exchange both Shuncucker and Veeble seem to have moved right into the foreground, up close to the microphone, perhaps suggesting that they're now under cover instead of standing in the middle of the room.

VEEBLE: We have to get out of here!

SHUNCUCKER: Why?

VEEBLE: They've got guns!

SHUNCUCKER: So? I've got my great big axe.

VEEBLE: What are you talking about? You haven't got a -

F/X: The swing of a shadow-weapon. It's much like Justine's shadow-weaponry, from Volumes 1-4, but louder and heavier than the ones we're used to. It is, of course, Shuncucker's great big axe.

VEEBLE [taken aback]: - your shadow...

F/X: Shuncucker runs across the chamber, swinging her great big axe. The convicts are obviously rather surprised by this, and there's a brief lull in the shooting as they try to figure out what they're facing, but it doesn't take long for them to open fire again.

SHUNCUCKER: *Yaahaaaaah!*

F/X: In the background we can hear the sound of an almighty struggle, with constant, heavy blows from the axe and occasional bursts of gunfire. There are sounds of panic from the convicts themselves, and the whole thing comes across as one big, chaotic mess of arms and legs. Probably severed arms and legs, since there are unpleasantly wet noises whenever the axe hits one of its victims.

SHUNCUCKER: Hah! Thought I was going to give you a chance, didn't you? *Didn't* you?

F/X: As the battle goes on, there's less gunfire and more chopping. Shuncucker seems to be the kind of person who keeps hitting things even after they're dead. We hear one of the convicts gabbling in alarm, possibly trying to surrender.

SHUNCUCKER: When will you people learn? *Always - do - the unexpected!*

F/X: With one final blow from the axe, the battle ends and the last of the convicts stops squealing. There's a moment's peace.

SHUNCUCKER [shouting]: Hey! Come back! Coward! **[To Veeble.]** Look at her! Rolling off down the corridor like that. No staying power.

VEEBLE [with some horror]: That's her head. You decapitated her.

SHUNCUCKER: Well, I know that. But she might have grown a new body or something.

VEEBLE: Can her species do that...?

SHUNCUCKER: How the hell should I know? I've never seen her before in my life.

VEEBLE: Your weapon -

SHUNCUCKER [coming back into the foreground]: What? Oh, that. Shadow-bonded. Never go anywhere without it. Now tell me what's going on or I'll cut your bloody arms off.

VEEBLE [thrown]: Oh. Uhh... there's been a break-out. One of the prisoners from the first gallery, she... **[gives up]** ...I don't know. I don't know *what* happened. She's started freeing the others, it's like a revolution -

SHUNCUCKER: What prisoner?

VEEBLE: Kine. Demetra Kine.

SHUNCUCKER: Never heard of her.

VEEBLE: Her family's one of the Blood Coteries. From the post-human era. They're supposed to be aristocrats, or crime-lords, or... something. They've got this whole empire -

SHUNCUCKER: Does she want a fight?

VEEBLE: That's just it. That's why I opened your casket. You're Faction Paradox.

SHUNCUCKER: Don't understand. Talk faster.

VEEBLE: Look... they tried to get into the prison records. I put a lock on the system before they could get everything they wanted, but... I saw what they're looking for. What *she's* looking for. She's after one of the inmates.

SHUNCUCKER: Well, obviously. That's understandable. I'm very popular.

VEEBLE [not sure whether he should say this]: Nnnnnno... I don't think it's you she wants.

SHUNCUCKER: Don't be ridiculous. Who, then?

VEEBLE: I think... [**Gives up and starts again.**] There was another one of your people put into storage about six months ago. Justine. Cousin Justine. I remember reading the manifest. She was special.

SHUNCUCKER: *I'm special!*

VEEBLE: No, but she was carrying this... weapon. That's what Kine was trying to find in the records. Some kind of doomsday device, or -

SHUNCUCKER: Pff! Bet it's not as good as mine.

F/X: Sudden blow from the shadow-axe.

VEEBLE: That... nearly hit me.

SHUNCUCKER: Good. So you want me to save this Cousin of yours, is that it?

VEEBLE: I want to get out of here. Look, I'm not ready for this. I just thought... Kine's got some kind of grudge against you Faction people, so if I help *you* -

SHUNCUCKER: I don't need any help. I'm indestructible.

VEEBLE: All right, I just mean... I can lead you to the Cousin, and then maybe you can keep me alive long enough for us to get out of here, yeah?

SHUNCUCKER: Hmmm.

F/X: Shuncucker swings the axe again, but this time the sound never quite ends: instead of being a sudden blow it becomes a constant, static hum, as if Shuncucker's drawing the weapon and swooshing it around

without actually hitting anything. It sounds like an obvious threat, like someone half-drawing their sword just to make a point.

SHUNCUCKER: Right then. Where's this Kine woman who's looking for trouble?

Fade.

F/X: Another part of the prison. There's no subdued humming here, though. The acoustics suggest a wide, open, metallic space, and at the moment it's *full* of convicts. They're not as aggressive as the ones from the previous scene, but they're obviously unsettled and making a hell of a racket: we can hear numerous voices, most of them non-human, chattering irritably as if a fight's going to break out at any minute. Notably, all the voices which have an identifiable gender seem to be female. (There are supposed to be hundreds of people here, so I'd tentatively suggest using generic crowd noise and overlaying a few more distinctive, unusual voices closer to the foreground.) The next voice we hear carries over the crowd, as if it's addressing the convicts from a balcony of some kind. There's obviously a lot of echo.

DEMETRA: If I could have your attention...?

F/X: The crowd noise dims slightly, but not much.

DEMETRA: *If* I could have your attention.

F/X: She doesn't raise her voice, but there's obviously something about her insistence that does the trick. The crowd settles down and turns its attention to Demetra Kine. Throughout the rest of the scene there's still some murmuring and restlessness from the convicts, but Demetra's clearly in the position of authority here. She speaks in her usual measured, careful manner.

DEMETRA: This is... going to be hard for a lot of you. I understand that. You've all been out of action for, what... years? Hundreds of years? You're confused. That's nothing to be ashamed of.

F/X: A brief upsurge from the audience. They're wary rather than hostile, and they soon settle down again.

DEMETRA: Just so you know... my name is Demetra Kine. Now, I'm not going to pretend that all of you are going to know that name. You come from different times, different worlds, you've got your own ways of doing things. I appreciate that. But you've got to understand... we're all in the same position here. All of us were tried by the Great Houses. A lot of you didn't even know there was a trial, but there was, and that's why you're here. You went places the Houses didn't want you to go. You found out things they didn't want you to find out. You pushed too hard, and they had to get you out of the way.

F/X: Another upsurge. This time it seems more agreeable.

DEMETRA: Let's not pretend. We weren't innocent. We all knew what we were doing, and we knew there'd be consequences. But we're reasonable people. That's why I woke you up. That's why, out of all the inmates here, you're the ones who are back out in the real world while the others are still in their coffins. Because I know you're reasonable. And I know we can do business.

F/X: Murmurings of all kinds. The crowd's undecided.

GENERIC ROWDY FEMALE PRISONER [some way from the balcony]: And who put *you* in charge?

DEMETRA [considers this question]: Tell me... have you checked your mark?

GENERIC ROWDY FEMALE PRISONER [thrown]: What?

DEMETRA: When you came here, you were given a mark. A tattoo. It's part of the Houses' security precautions, a tattoo on the right arm. If you've *got* an arm under that cartilage.

F/X: Some amusement in the crowd. Non-human chuckling.

DEMETRA: Now, we've got a tradition, where I come from. The tradition is that if you're in the employ of one of the Coteries, then you have the face of your patron... your *mecheynaté* ... tattooed on your body. It's a mark of respect.

RENDERMANN [in the crowd... at this stage she's just another generic prisoner]: You've marked us? With your own face?

F/X: A brief wave of unrest in the audience.

DEMETRA: You might have noticed my associate here. Mandeema Kweiler, my *seguaché*.

MANDEEMA: Nrrhn.

DEMETRA: Apart from being a good friend and a loyal soldier, she also happens to be something of a specialist when it comes to the art of the body. Which is why... before you all recovered... I asked her to modify your tattoos. Just a little.

F/X: Much muttering.

DEMETRA: It's business. That's all. The truth is, I freed you from this prison. Now, maybe in your own worlds you do things differently, but the way I see it... that puts you in my debt.

F/X: Ooh, the crowd doesn't like that much. It doesn't exactly explode with anger, though, so Demetra's still in control.

RENDERMANN: Unacceptable.

DEMETRA: I'm sorry, we haven't been introduced. Do I know you?

RENDERMANN [practically clicking her jackboot heels together]: Colonel Sadine Rendermann. Sixth Axis Science Corps. **[N.B. Her name's pronounced SAY-deen rather than SAR-deen. Otherwise she sounds like a fish.]**

DEMETRA: Colonel. Do I understand that... you're not happy with this arrangement?

RENDERMANN: You have no authority here. You have no authority over any of us.

DEMETRA [still perfectly reasonable]: I'm just trying to get you out of here alive, Colonel. You accept that, don't you?

RENDERMANN: I answer to the First Directorate of the Science Corps. Nobody else.

DEMETRA: It's your decision. But I'm sorry to hear that. I really am.

RENDERMANN [sudden pain]: *Ahhhh...*

DEMETRA: Is there a problem?

RENDERMANN [still in pain]: The tattoo. What have you done to the tattoo?

F/X: The sound we hear now is only just audible over the background noise, but we'll be hearing it again later so it's worth describing. It's a soft, organic squelching sound, with the horrible ring of something burrowing its way through flesh: it only lasts for a moment, and it seems to be in the foreground, i.e. where Rendermann's standing. The next voice we hear is clearly Demetra's, but somehow it's right up close rather than standing on

the balcony. It's also quite tinny - lots of treble, not much bass - almost like someone talking over a radio.

TATTOO: I'm always going to be on your shoulder, Colonel.

RENDERMANN [alarm rather than pain]: *Ah!*

TATTOO: You see, you're in my debt. Where I come from, we take that as a bond of honour.

RENDERMANN: It's *talking*...

DEMETRA: It's like I said. Mandeema here's a specialist.

RENDERMANN: Take it off me!

TATTOO: Can't do that, Colonel.

F/X: The crowd's getting a bit anxious now.

DEMETRA: Memeodermal imprinting. It's very effective.

RENDERMANN: I'll scratch you out myself! I'll scratch you out if I have to rip half my skin off!

TATTOO: I wouldn't do that if I were you, Colonel. You know what that'd feel like?

F/X: A quiet chomping sound from the tattoo. Just one bite.

RENDERMANN: AAHHH!

DEMETRA: Now, the way I see it... you've got a simple choice.

RENDERMANN: It *bit* me! How can it -

F/X: Another chomp. This one's a little longer, as if the tattoo's clenching its teeth.

RENDERMANN: AAAAHHHH!!!

DEMETRA: As I understand the technology... that tattoo's keyed into your whole bio-field. From your arm, it can reach out to any part of your body. Any patch of skin. Any artery. Any link in your spinal column. Any part at all.

RENDERMANN: Take it out!

F/X: The crowd's *really* on edge by this point. We can hear a rising tide of mumbling as Rendermann tries to cope with the pain.

DEMETRA: And if it bites too hard, then the way I see it... I'd be losing a potential ally for no good reason.

F/X: Accompanied by various gasping noises from Rendermann, the tattoo keeps biting. Ultimately there's a thump as Rendermann collapses to the floor, and the chewing stops.

DEMETRA: She'll be needing medical attention. Could someone see to that...?

F/X: A wave of agitation sweeps over the crowd. However, the convicts aren't reacting angrily (they're probably too alarmed) but just talking amongst themselves.

DEMETRA: Thankyou.

F/X: The crowd settles, realising that Demetra's about to speak again.

DEMETRA: It's very simple. Soon the Houses are going to be sending people here to find out what's happened to their prison facility. This prison's set outside normal-time, so to get here they're going to have to open a

channel from the outside world. And that's our way out. Do we all have weapons?

F/X: A positive murmur from the audience. Maybe a few clicking noises as a few of the convicts check their firearms.

DEMETRA: Good. That's good. Now, I'll be giving you your instructions soon. In the meantime... if anyone wants to talk to me, then I'll be in the control core. Is that acceptable?

F/X: More noise from the crowd. This time it just gets louder and louder, as the convicts realise that Demetra's finished her address and start comparing notes in an excitable fashion.

Fade into...

F/X: The control core, a room adjoining the area where the convicts are assembled. The idea is that this is being used as Demetra's "office", so it's a small space and in itself it's perfectly quiet. The door's open as the scene begins, so we can hear the murmuring outside, but soon the door slides shut and the voices are all but inaudible.

DEMETRA [once it's quiet]: That's our army, Mandeema. Two-hundred of the Spiral Politic's most wanted.

MANDEEMA: Rngrnh. Nrh rhgr.

DEMETRA: Well, what else can we expect? War criminals. Science criminals. Politicians. These people kill with words, it's all they're used to.

F/X: Here we want to give the impression that Demetra's crossing the room and sitting in a chair, if we can do that through sound. "Settling down" sounds from Demetra might help.

DEMETRA: All right. Bring in the official.

F/X: The door slides open, and the background noise from the assembly area briefly rises again until someone enters and the door slides shut behind him.

DEMETRA: They didn't hurt you?

SELVYNKESH [aloof, not trusting this scenario]: I'll live.

DEMETRA: You're wearing the colours of the Houses. I'm sure you understand, that's not going to make you popular here.

SELVYNKESH: You're only releasing the women.

DEMETRA: I'm sorry?

SELVYNKESH: The other prisoners you've let out. They're all women.

DEMETRA: Not true. Some of them are genderless. It's just the way we do things in my family. Male *legionnaré* are too prone to ambition, it's... not healthy. Would you like to sit?

SELVYNKESH: I'll stand. Thankyou.

DEMETRA: Now. As I understand it... you're chiefly responsible for security here, is that right?

SELVYNKESH: First Ordinary Sel -

DEMETRA: I know who you are. Selvynkesh. War Service First Ordinary, official mover with honours. Affiliated with House Ixion but seconded to discreet operations under the ruling Houses. Raised for menial work and... if you'll excuse me... not a lot else. It's all in the records.

SELVYNKESH: You've been through the records...?

DEMETRA: Up to a point.

SELVYNKESH: Then what do you want me for?

DEMETRA: I had a dream. [**Slight laugh.**] I don't know whether *you'd* call it a dream. I'm not a technician. I'm not a First Ordinary.

SELVYNKESH: While you were in the casket...?

DEMETRA: While I was in the casket. Except that I wasn't there. I was on a balcony. The balcony of the Castello Nieva Risa. [**Pronounced "nee-AIR-ver REE-sa."**] There was... music. My family used to be the greatest patrons of the opera in all of the Post-human Renaissance, did you know that? There's always music, in Siloportem. [**Naturally, the name "Siloportem" is pronounced as if it's somewhere in the Mediterranean.**] And colour. Two-thousand *legionarré* under the balcony. So much green and gold. Officers in blue. *Cavalleria* in silver. Not like here. This... *red* all the time. [**Pause.**] Should I have been dreaming?

SELVYNKESH: It's not unusual. It happens.

DEMETRA: You don't understand. I'm asking you... *should* I have been dreaming?

SELVYNKESH [uncertain]: I... should you have...?

DEMETRA: It hardly seems like justice. To take away someone's future like that. To seal it up in a little box. And then to give them so much of their past, just so they can see what they've lost. You know who I am?

SELVYNKESH: I know.

DEMETRA: Good. Then you can tell me why I'm here.

SELVYNKESH: You were tried by the Great Houses. In absentia. Something about illegal bio-manipulation, you'd have to check the records -

DEMETRA [slightly more aggressive]: I'm not *stupid*. I know why I was tried, I know why I was convicted and I know why I was put here. What I'm asking you is... why was I let out?

F/X: Selvynkesh doesn't immediately respond. Then there's a slamming sound, as if someone's pushing him against the wall to intimidate him.

SELVYNKESH: Oo -

MANDEEMA: Rhgr.

DEMETRA: Mandeema. Please. **[Cool again.]** In theory, nobody ever gets out of a place like this. And yet, all of a sudden, myself and a few of the others find ourselves wide awake again. Now... I'd be interested in knowing why that happened.

SELVYNKESH [after a pause]: I let you out.

DEMETRA: I know. Like I said, I'm not stupid, Mister... *Mister* Selvynkesh? Is that what I call you?

SELVYNKESH: First Ordinary.

DEMETRA: Well, First Ordinary. The way I see it, if a prison guard helps a convict escape then he's been bribed. But I know *I* didn't pay you. Besides, you're a child of the Houses. You don't need money. Even if you're only a menial worker.

SELVYNKESH: Does it matter why I did it?

DEMETRA: It's important to know where people's loyalties are. House Ixion... it's a dying bloodline, am I right? What you people call a "Broken

House"? No offence meant, but... I understand it only makes servants, these days.

SELVYNKESH: You sound like you know all the answers already.

DEMETRA: Then humour me. Tell me what I'm missing.

SELVYNKESH: Our House has a... history.

DEMETRA: And you're proud of your history?

SELVYNKESH [some bitterness creeping into his voice here]: We were the first ones who saw the War coming. We were the first ones who realised how things were going to have to change. A whole generation ago. The things the ruling Houses are doing now... that was *our* vision.

DEMETRA: I understand. You had foresight. And the other Houses weren't ready for it, is that what you're saying?

SELVYNKESH [still bitter]: It's not important.

DEMETRA: It's important to you. This... vendetta of yours. This prison's an embarrassment to the Houses, they don't even like to admit it's here. Stage a break-out, and it's even worse. Is that what you had in mind? A kind of revenge?

SELVYNKESH: It's politics.

DEMETRA: It's revenge. And this was all *your* idea?

SELVYNKESH [with irony]: I had a moment of inspiration.

DEMETRA: You did what you had to. You let myself and some of my associates out, and I'm grateful for that. But some of the others here... they're not going to be so reasonable.

MANDEEMA: Nrrhn.

SELVYNKESH [hurriedly, perhaps a little scared]: I can get you away from here.

DEMETRA: I'm sure you can.

SELVYNKESH: There's an outrigger platform. It's under the control core, it's the only way out of here before the Houses arrive -

DEMETRA: *Please.* I know all this. But we're not going anywhere.

SELVYNKESH [surprised]: What?

DEMETRA: Not yet. You see, Mr... you see, *First Ordinary* Selvynkesh... it occurs to me that there are some inmates in this place who deserve special attention. Do you understand me?

SELVYNKESH: No. No, I'm not sure I do.

DEMETRA: Faction Paradox.

SELVYNKESH: Faction...?

DEMETRA: I'm pragmatic about these things. Your Great Houses had me incarcerated here, and that doesn't make me happy, but I'm not going to hold grudges. But my family's got something of a special relationship with Faction Paradox. Call it a vendetta of our own. The Faction's crossed us, we've crossed the Faction... these things happen. Mandeema?

MANDEEMA: Rhgr.

F/X: Sounds of a minor scuffle. Mandeema man-handling Selvynkesh. Ripping cloth as his uniform's pulled open.

SELVYNKESH [panicking]: Listen. Listen to me. You don't want to hurt me -

DEMETRA: That's true. But don't worry. Mandeema knows how to do her job.

F/X: The sounds of the struggle go on, but Selvynkesh can't really put up much resistance. Then a new sound enters the picture. It's a low, ominous burhing, not unlike a drill, certainly a tool of some description.

SELVYNKESH: Her job...?

DEMETRA: You're just going to get a tattoo. That's all.

F/X: The tool gets louder. Selvynkesh is probably trying to pull away.

SELVYNKESH: I've got no reason to fight you -

DEMETRA: And I've got no reason to fight *you*. But I can't take chances. You understand.

F/X: The tool touches skin. The burhing increases in pitch when this happens. It sounds painful.

SELVYNKESH: *Ahhhhh...*

DEMETRA: It's like this. Somewhere in your prison, there's a Cousin from Faction Paradox. And she's carrying something important. Something passed down to her from the founder of her family. Do you know what I'm talking about?

SELVYNKESH: Please... it's hurting...

DEMETRA: Do you know what I'm talking about?

SELVYNKESH: I'm not sure. This Cousin...

DEMETRA: She's carrying the shadow of Grandfather Paradox.

F/X: The high-pitched burping goes on as Mandeema does her work. Selvynkesh is obviously in some discomfort, but no longer panicking.

SELVYNKESH [hesitant]: Yes... yes, I know her...

DEMETRA: That's good. Really, that's good. Because all we want is someone to take us to where she's being kept.

SELVYNKESH: You want to... *ahh*... to kill her?

DEMETRA: Don't worry about it. She'll be asleep when it happens.

F/X: The tattooing needle becomes louder, and more intense. It's all getting very *Marathon Man*.

SELVYNKESH: *Oww!* That isn't... that isn't a normal tattoo...

DEMETRA: She might even be dreaming. It'd be nice to think that, wouldn't it?

F/X: The tattooing needle gets louder, and louder, until it fills up the entire stereo picture. The sound suggests that it's somehow going deeper than the skin, as if there's something downright surgical about it. We may be able to hear Selvynkesh gurgling in pain before we...

Fade into...

F/X: Back in Justine's past. In fact this is the same scene we left, with the horsemen riding towards Justine and Emma across the field: possibly it might be an idea to fade into this scene through the "distortion" effects, to establish that we're going back into the flashback? Either way, the important

thing is that by the time the horsemen come to a halt the sound effects are perfectly normal, suggesting several large horses surrounding the two girls (intimidating but not particularly strange). The horses snort and shuffle their feet as they stop, and there's a pause before anyone speaks.

EMMA [now sounding rather intimidated]: Good... afternoon, sir.

SABBATH [from horseback]: What are you doing here?

EMMA: I'm sorry, I...

JUSTINE [somewhat less intimidated]: My friend has hurt her foot, sir. I was helping her.

EMMA [hisses]: Justine, don't tell them that -

JUSTINE: It's all right. This isn't private land. We haven't done anything wrong.

SABBATH: You're in the way of the hunt. You could get yourselves killed here.

F/X: One of the horses trots forward a little during the next line, suggesting Godfather Morlock coming into view.

MORLOCK [approaching]: Oh, don't be so dramatic. Statistically, of course, there's more chance of her being murdered by a lunatic than run down by a master horseman like yourself. Especially today.

SABBATH [warningly]: Morlock -

MORLOCK: And you're quite right, young lady. You've a far greater right to be here than we have. At least 80% so, if I'm any judge.

JUSTINE: Sir... you're on a hunt? Here?

EMMA: But you don't have any dogs.

MORLOCK: Oh, *that's* hardly a problem. It's not what you'd call a conventional sort of hunt. It's something of a ritual of self-discovery for Godfather Sabbath here.

SABBATH: That's enough, Morlock.

JUSTINE: "Godfather"?

MORLOCK: I'm sorry, I was neglecting the introductions. Godfather Morlock, of the Eleven-Day Empire. Godfather Sabbath, likewise.

SABBATH [now quite irritated]: They don't need to know our names.

MORLOCK: Nonsense. Given the size of the local community and the background level of social paranoia, I'd say that we only have to introduce ourselves to six or seven people here before we become local legends. Once we're gone, naturally.

SABBATH [wearily]: And that's a good thing...?

MORLOCK: Personally, I've always wanted to be a mythical beast. It's something of an ambition of mine. I should imagine we'll be remembered by future generations as black riders of death. Which is rather flattering, when you think about it.

EMMA [whispers]: Justine. Their horses...

SABBATH [snappish]: There's nothing wrong with them. They're just wearing armour.

EMMA: But their heads -

SABBATH: Did you hear what I said?

JUSTINE: Excuse me, sir. But there's no reason to talk to my cousin that way.

MORLOCK: Well, quite. You'll have to forgive Godfather Sabbath, miss...?

JUSTINE [a little thrown]: Justine. Sir.

MORLOCK: You'll have to forgive the Godfather, Miss Justine. He's tracking a rather exotic sort of animal, and so far she's managed to elude him.

JUSTINE: "She"?

SABBATH [bad at lying]: The... animal. It's a female of its type.

MORLOCK: Quite. And the Godfather here is hoping to catch it before the mating season.

SABBATH [you can almost see him glaring]: We're wasting time.

MORLOCK: I just wondered whether these young ladies might be able to help us. Hmm?

F/X: There's a pause, and one of the horses restlessly shuffles its feet. It sounds as if Godfather Sabbath's weighing up his options.

SABBATH: Yes, that's... possible.

JUSTINE: I don't know a great deal about animals, sir.

EMMA: I know about horses.

MORLOCK: Godfather Sabbath...?

SABBATH [clearly lying here, and unconvincingly]: I'm... superstitious. I might need some... **[struggling]** ...good luck to help me with the hunt.

JUSTINE: I can wish you luck, if you like. Or there's a priest. Reverend Bell -

SABBATH [too quickly]: No. No, I was thinking more of... do you have a local... **[giving up]** ...Morlock, help me with this. A local...

MORLOCK: Witch?

EMMA: "Witch"?

JUSTINE: I think you've come to the wrong place, sir. We may be in the country, but -

SABBATH [trying not to get too irritated]: Not a witch, then. A... supernaturalist? A spirit-healer? But a woman. It has to be a woman.

MORLOCK: I don't think that sounds a *great* deal more rational, do you, Godfather?

SABBATH: But is there anyone like that? Anyone at all? Someone who .. *attracts* things. Who seems...

MORLOCK: ...who seems rather out of joint with the rest of your community.

SABBATH: Yes. That's it. Is there a woman like that? Here? **[No reply.]** Well?

JUSTINE: None that I can think of, sir.

EMMA: There's always my - **[She stops dead, and thinks better of saying it.]** - no. No, not really. Nobody.

F/X: Another restless shuffle from Sabbath's horse. The idea here is that Sabbath doesn't quite trust the girls, so obviously the horse can feel the tension in the scene (it may not make sense but it works aesthetically).

SABBATH [curtly]: I see. Then we're wasting each other's time.

F/X: Sabbath tugs on the reigns. His horse turns, and gallops off, followed by several of the others in the hunt. Justine waits until the sound's started to fade before she speaks again.

JUSTINE: Your friend isn't very well-tempered, sir.

MORLOCK: Oh, ignore him. This hunt's something of an initiation for him. Our employers might be... less well-disposed towards him, if he doesn't find what he's after.

JUSTINE: But not you?

MORLOCK: Ah. I'm only his Second. My interest in all this is a lot less personal than his.

F/X: Morlock tugs at his own reigns. The horse turns.

MORLOCK: A *lot* less personal.

F/X: Morlock's horse gallops away, off into the background. There's another brief delay, long enough for him to get out of earshot, before either of the girls say anything.

EMMA: Who *were* they?

JUSTINE: I think they might have been foreign.

EMMA: Were they spies? They said there was an Empire...

JUSTINE: What they said. About looking for a woman. Did that seem strange to you?

EMMA: I thought it was *all* strange. Especially their horses.

JUSTINE: But asking that question. After what they said about the hunt...

F/X: Somewhere in the distance, there's a rumbling in the sky. Quiet but ominous.

EMMA: Stormclouds. Where did the stormclouds come from?

JUSTINE: It's going to rain. I *knew* it was going to rain.

EMMA: We should get indoors. Aunt Fiora's house is just on the other side of the Fields...

JUSTINE: Can you walk?

F/X: Emma gets to her feet. Awkwardly.

EMMA: Hurts a little.

JUSTINE: You can lean on me, if you like.

F/X: They begin to walk away. Their footsteps might be heavier than usual, mainly because of Emma's limping.

EMMA [getting further away]: Annie Docherty isn't going to believe this when we tell her.

F/X: The footsteps move away, as the rumbling from above gets louder. Then...

Fade into...

F/X: Prison corridor background. There are no sounds of rioting here, no gunshots in the background, but a new noise *has* entered the picture: it sounds a lot like rain, water falling from somewhere up above and onto the corridor floor. At the very least, some kind of sprinkler system must have been activated here. (This should segue nicely from the "flashback" scene with the stormclouds, natch.) Through the indoor rain we can hear two sets of footsteps, coming this way.

VEEBLE [in the background]: It's down here.

F/X: The footsteps get closer. The voices of Veeble and Shuncucker move into the foreground. They don't stop walking.

SHUNCUCKER: Am I having some kind of flashback? 'Cos... to me, it looks like it's raining in here.

VEEBLE: The coolant system must've burst open. The inmates have been playing around with the life-support.

SHUNCUCKER [grim]: Well, that's just great. My first half-hour in a prison full of women, and they're *already* trying to get me into the showers.

VEEBLE [not knowing what to say to that]: Um... it's this way.

F/X: Veeble's footsteps stop. Suncucker's come to a shambling halt shortly afterwards.

VEEBLE: Oh, no.

SHUNCUCKER: What?

VEEBLE: Corridor's blocked off. They must have figured out how to use the lockdowns.

SHUNCUCKER: It's just a door. Look at it.

F/X: Metallic clanging, as Shuncucker repeatedly bangs on the door with her fist.

SHUNCUCKER: Hello, door! You're going to open for me, because... I'm better-looking than you.

VEEBLE: It's no good You can only open it from the control core. Maybe we can find a terminal, tell it to -

F/X: Two strikes from the shadow-axe. Ideally the strikes should end on a flat note, as if the axe has hit the metal door with no effect whatsoever.

VEEBLE: There's no way an axe is going to get through that.

SHUNCUCKER: I know that! I just need to get rid of the axe, and...

F/X: A sudden burst of violence in the background. We hear an aggressive gurgling sound, then gunfire: one of the convicts has appeared at the end of the passage, and she's shooting at either Shuncucker or Veeble.

SHUNCUCKER: There, see? Perfect.

F/X: The sound of an enormous shadow-axe whistling through the air and into the background. There's a wet thud as it hits the convict, and a *splash* as the convict hits the water-logged floor. Then the gurgling stops. Everything goes quiet, apart from the dirrhly background noise.

VEEBLE: You just... threw your shadow away.

SHUNCUCKER: And?

VEEBLE: With your weapon on it.

SHUNCUCKER: Your point being?

VEEBLE: Well... can you get it back?

SHUNCUCKER [like the answer's obvious]: I don't need to. I can just grow a new one.

F/X: Another shadow-weapon strike. This one doesn't sound as heavy as the axe, and there's an echo of something high-pitched and electronic as it whistles through the air.

SHUNCUCKER: *Hah!*

VEEBLE: What's *that*?

SHUNCUCKER: How the hell should I know? Probably a thermal lance, or something. Just came to me.

VEEBLE: Thermal lances aren't that big!

SHUNCUCKER: Well, that's their problem.

F/X: Another strike with the shadow-lance, or whatever it might be, as Shuncucker stabs the door with it. Sparks fly. It's obviously slicing through the metal.

SHUNCUCKER: Now tell this door who I am!

VEEBLE: Uhh. Door, this is... err...

F/X: More sparks and high-pitched whining as the lance cuts through the door. It's all very loud and industrial.

SHUNCUCKER: Too late.

F/X: A huge metallic clang. The door has apparently fallen off its hinges, and fallen to the floor with a massive booming impact. Not to mention a big splash.

SHUNCUCKER: Door's dead. Come on.

F/X: Shuncucker's footsteps start to move into the background. Possibly clanging noises, as she steps over the door?

VEEBLE [not really expecting an answer]: How did you *do* that...?

Fade.

F/X: The convicts' assembly area. There's a lot of activity, a lot of noise from the crowd and a lot of weapons being checked (although thankfully there's no indoor rain here). Demetra Kine's here again, but this time her voice is close by and doesn't sound as if it's coming from above. Nor does the crowd stop talking when she speaks, suggesting that she's now at "ground level" among the other convicts, talking to individual groups.

DEMETRA [addressing the crowd]: The first thing I want you to do is secure the control core. There are eighteen access points to this part of the prison, and I want all of them covered. **[No change in the background noise.]** I'm assuming I can trust you to work out the details between yourselves...?

F/X: A flurry of movement, as several of the inmates scurry off to sort things out.

DEMETRA [directly to Selvynkesh]: How do you feel?

SELVYNKESH: It... *hurts*.

DEMETRA: It's part of the process. Do you have a weapon?

SELVYNKESH: What? No. We don't need weapons.

DEMETRA: But there *are* weapons here in the facility. The storage cells.

SELVYNKESH: This isn't just a prison. This is where the Houses keep everything they don't want to leave inside normal-space. Records, technology... everything. Most of the weapons are just personal effects. Brought in with the prisoners.

DEMETRA [almost amused]: And you don't call that a liability?

SELVYNKESH: Not really. You're, ahh... not supposed to escape. **[More urgently.]** Miss Kine, you don't need weapons. You could be gone from here by the time the House Military arrives. I told you, there's an exit -

DEMETRA: I know. And I appreciate it. But I'd be grateful if you didn't share that information with the other inmates. They might ask questions. You know how people are.

MANDEEMA: Nrrhn.

DEMETRA: So. Take Mandeema here to the storage cells, let her have anything she needs. And take a weapon for yourself while you're there.

SELVYNKESH: But I don't know how to use a -

DEMETRA: Please. Humour me. Arm yourselves, and then go and find the girl with the Grandfather's shadow.

MANDEEMA: Rhgr nrh?

DEMETRA: No. Bring her back here, to me. The family wants the body in one piece once we get back to Siloportem. And take some of the other prisoners with you, just in case there's any... difficulty.

MANDEEMA: Nnrhgrhr?

DEMETRA: Not yet. We'll leave the trackers in storage unless we need them. We don't want things to get messy.

SELVYNKESH: "Trackers"?

DEMETRA: It doesn't concern you. Don't worry about it.

SELVYNKESH: But you said "difficulty". If you're expecting some kind of problem -

DEMETRA: You're dealing with Faction Paradox, First Ordinary. Believe me. There's *always* going to be a problem.

Fade.

F/X: Prison chamber background, this time with "rain". Footsteps move into the room before coming to a stop.

VEEBLE: This is it. This is the chamber where we put the Cousin.

SHUNCUCKER: God. Look at all the bodies. [**Shouting at them, as if they can hear her inside the caskets.**] Hello, bodies! You're frozen and I'm not, and that makes me the best.

VEEBLE [hushed]: *Please...*

SHUNCUCKER: What?

VEEBLE: There could be more of Kine's people.

SHUNUCKER: I bloody hope so. I want to see what this lance thing does if you stick through someone's head.

VEEBLE [shocked]: Why?

SHUNUCKER [sounding more pissed than ever]: It's the scientific approach. I'm very analytical.

F/X: Veeble crosses the room.

VEEBLE: Here. This one. This is her.

F/X: Shuncucker follows him over.

SHUNUCKER: That's her? That's this Faction Paradox master-criminal you were talking about?

VEEBLE: That's her.

SHUNUCKER: Pff. That can't be right. Just look at her.

VEEBLE: What's wrong with her?

SHUNUCKER: Too skinny. She couldn't even lift her shadow, never mind hit anyone with it.

VEEBLE: Err... actually, her shadow's supposed to be special. It's meant to be the shadow of -

F/X: Veeble's interrupted by the sound of Shuncucker hammering on the front of the casket. It sounds like someone knocking on glass.

SHUNUCKER [shouting]: Hello! Hello in there! **[To Veeble.]** Can she hear me?

VEEBLE: No.

SHUNCUCKER: Bet she can. She's probably just faking. **[Shouting.]**
Hello!

F/X: More hammering.

VEEBLE: Stand back. I'd better start the disinterment.

SHUNCUCKER [still shouting]: Did you hear what I said? I said, you're too skinny! Much too skinny! You should eat something.

VEEBLE: Look, we have to work fast -

SHUNCUCKER [shouting]: Justine, is that your name? Listen. I know this is going to be a shock to you, but apparently you're important. That's why we're going to let you out. You understand? Out! **[To Veeble.]** Did you say something?

VEEBLE [mutters]: Never mind.

F/X: We fade into the corridor outside the chamber, so a slightly different background noise (the two scenes are going to blend into each other here, and it's not worth separating them). Several pairs of footsteps are moving along the passage through the water, very nearly marching in time. Mandeema, Selvynkesh and a small troop of convicts.

SELVYNKESH: It's through here.

MANDEEMA: Grnrhnr.

SELVYNKESH: Can I... can I ask what happened to you?

MANDEEMA: Rhgr?

SELVYNKESH: Your face. Your throat...

MANDEEMA: Rngrnh. Rhgr rngrnh.

SELVYNKESH [not understanding any of this]: Oh.

F/X: The same squelching, icky sound we heard when the tattoo started speaking on Rendermann's arm. This time we can hear it a lot more clearly.

TATTOO: It's body-art.

SELVYNKESH [startled]: *Aah!*

TATTOO: Is there a problem?

SELVYNKESH: Please... could you not do that? When you talk through the tattoo, it... stings.

TATTOO: You'll come to like it. Trust me. There's not an inch of Mandeema's body that hasn't been tattooed, pierced or femto-accelerated. Inside *or* out.

SELVYNKESH: That's horrible.

MANDEEMA [warningly]: Rngrnh!

DEMETRA: It's just a sign of respect. She's served the Coteries since we were both children. That's why I chose her for this.

SELVYNKESH: Chose...?

F/X: Selvynkesh stops moving. It takes the footsteps behind him a while to come to a halt.

SELVYNKESH: Wait. Stop.

MANDEEMA: Nrrhn?

SELVYNKESH: The door. The security lockdown, it's *gone*. Look.

TATTOO: I can't see. If you could hold the tattoo up... just turn a little, that's it...

MANDEEMA: Rhgr nrrhn.

TATTOO: There's somebody in the chamber. On the other side.

SELVYNKESH: It's Veeble...

TATTOO: Mandeema?

MANDEEMA: Rngrnh!

TATTOO [raises its voice]: All you others. Move forward. Secure the area.

F/X: Perhaps somewhat hesitantly, the other convicts start to trot forward after Mandeema.

SELVYNKESH: No, wait -

F/X: Back inside the chamber. The footsteps of Mandeema and the inmates can be heard in the background as they charge towards the room.

VEEBLE: Shuncucker!

SHUNCUCKER: *Kresta Ve* Shuncucker. Last scion of the Faction homeworld -

F/X: An enormous electrical crackle, apparently a shot of some description, fihles across the stereo picture and slams into the wall. These clearly aren't the same weapons used by the convicts earlier on, and really do sound a lot more impressive.

SHUNCUCKER: Oh, right.

MANDEEMA [at a distance]: Nnrhgrhr!

F/X: Another couple of shots, but the centre of our attention here is Mandeema, who's charging across the chamber towards Shuncucker. (The footsteps probably go "splash" since the chamber's water-logged, but maybe it's not worth being *that* pedantic.)

SHUNCUCKER: You know, she said that without moving her lips.

VEEBLE: There's too many -

SHUNCUCKER: Oh, just get down behind the cabinet.

VEEBLE: We can't -

SHUNCUCKER: *Down.*

MANDEEMA [coming into the foreground]: Rngrnh -

F/X: A strike from Shuncucker's shadow-lance. This time it connects with flesh.

MANDEEMA [agonised noise]: *Nnrhgrhrnnrhgrhrnrhn!*

SHUNCUCKER: Hah! Feel the wrath of my thermal lance! Or whatever it is.

F/X: Another bolt of energy sweeps across the picture, this time close to "us" as it wings Shuncucker. We can hear her stumbling backwards.

SHUNCUCKER: Ow!

F/X: More fire. Shuncucker scrambling to her feet. Possibly the sound of convicts' voices just outside the chamber, babbling excitedly.

SHUNCUCKER: Stop shooting at me! You know I'm just going to...

F/X: One of the electrical shots comes perilously close to Shuncucker, but there's a shadow-weapon strike at the same time. There's a brief crackling noise as the two connect, and the shot explodes against the wall.

SHUNCUCKER: ...deflect the...

F/X: It happens again.

SHUNCUCKER: ...shots...

F/X: And again. This time, however, the discharge obviously hits one of the convicts. There's a pained squawk in the background.

SHUNCUCKER: *I like* this weapon. Does everything.

MANDEEMA [elephantine roar, lunging forward]: Grnrhnr!

F/X: A shift in the noise as we move back out into the corridor. Though the inmates are still firing, there's a lot of confused gibbering going on.

TATTOO: What's happening?

SELVYNKESH: I don't know. The other prisoners are firing, but they keep missing -

TATTOO: They're amateurs. What's happening to Mandeema?

SELVYNKESH: She's on the floor. She's pinning someone down, I can't see -

TATTOO: Hold my face up. Let me look.

SELVYNKESH: There's too many shots -

TATTOO: I said, hold my face up!

F/X: Back inside the chamber. The electrical fire has stopped, but there's the sound of hurrying footsteps as the inmates stomp their way into the room. There's also the sound of a scuffle in the foreground: Mandeema physically grappling Shuncucker.

MANDEEMA: Rngrnh!

SHUNCUCKER [strained... she's got someone's hands around her throat]: All right. I'm going to count to three, and then you're going to get off me. One...

F/X: The scuffling becomes more violent. It sounds like Shuncucker's about to choke, and she can barely speak by now.

SHUNCUCKER: Two...

MANDEEMA: Nrrhn!

F/X: The sound of the shadow-lance, being thrust through someone's body. There's the same high-pitched whine we heard when it cut through the door, suggesting that it's going through bone.

SHUNCUCKER: *Three!*

MANDEEMA [more elephantine bellowing, obviously extreme pain]: Rhgr! Nnrhgrhrrngrnh!

SHUNCUCKER: See, I told you.

F/X: Heavy footsteps over the background noise. Mandeema falling back in agony, stumbling into the fittings.

MANDEEMA: Nnrhgrhrrnh!

F/X: Back to the corridor. Mandeema's bellowing can still be heard in the background, as can sporadic gunfire. The inmates are firing on Shuncucker, but for the most part they're hitting the walls.

SELVYNKESH: She's been hit. It was like a shadow...

TATTOO [urgent]: What's she doing now? **[No reply.]** Selvynkesh! Answer me. What's she doing?

SELVYNKESH: She's got one of those... things. From the armoury.

TATTOO: Grenades?

SELVYNKESH: I don't know. I don't know weapons -

TATTOO [abrupt]: Strata grenades. Fall back.

SELVYNKESH: She's thrown it...

TATTOO: I said fall back. *Now.*

F/X: The chamber. In the background the other inmates are panicking, letting off shots but gabbling to each other excitedly.

MANDEEMA [obviously in pain]: Rngrnh rhgr!

SHUNCUCKER: It's no good, I haven't got a clue what you're saying.

VEEBLE [in the background]: It's a strata grenade!

SHUNCUCKER: A what?

VEEBLE [getting closer]: Get away from it!!! It's a bomb!!!

SHUNCUCKER: Oh, well, that's just cheating.

VEEBLE: *Get away!*

MANDEEMA [final triumphant roar]: Nnrhgrhrnnrhgrhr!

F/X: ...and then the entire scene is swallowed up in a colossal explosion. Rather than being the usual big bang, it's more like an enormous *weeeeoomf*, as if something huge, black and lethal has suddenly appeared out of nowhere in the middle of the chamber and expanded to swallow up anything in its way. Basically it's an enormous gaping hole, opening up to consume as much of the chamber as it can, but it *is* very, very loud and completely fills the stereo picture.

Fade into...

F/X: ...a crack of thunder, and the "indoor rain" background of the prison is replaced by the sound of *real* rain as we move back into Justine's past. There are wet footsteps in the rain, and shortly after the thunder there's the sound of someone falling into a puddle.

JUSTINE: *Ahhhh!*

EMMA: What happened?

JUSTINE: Nothing. I slipped. That's all.

EMMA: It's the rain. It's getting worse. The sky's so dark...

JUSTINE: Could you give me your hand?

F/X: Justine, picking herself up from the wet ground.

EMMA: Justine...

JUSTINE: Yes?

F/X: A pause. There's another rumble of thunder in the gap, but some distance away this time.

EMMA: There. The edge of the field. It's the hunters.

JUSTINE: They're not moving. Those masks they're wearing...

EMMA: What are they doing?

JUSTINE: It looks like they're watching us.

EMMA: Why? What have we done?

F/X: Another rumble. Ideally it should sound as if the weather's getting worse at this point, so the rain's heavier and the rumbling's more frequent.

JUSTINE [chiefly to herself]: It's them...

EMMA: The house isn't far. You can see it from here. See? Between the trees.

JUSTINE: It's them. They're the ones who are doing this.

EMMA: Doing what?

JUSTINE [distracted]: It's... today. Here. Now. There's something about today.

EMMA [panicking]: What are you talking about?

JUSTINE: I'm inside my own coffin...

EMMA: You're not making any sense!

JUSTINE [now even *she's* panicking, almost becoming hysterical]:
Is this real? Is any of this real? Or is this the dream?

EMMA: Justine, please!

JUSTINE: I can *feel* it. I can feel it coming, but... it hasn't happened yet. I can't explain. This is real, but it's the dream as well. The dream's making it happen.

EMMA: You're mad. You're just like your stepmother!

F/X: There's another rumble, directly overhead, although this time it doesn't sound entirely like thunder. It doesn't really matter *exactly* what the sound is, but we should get the sense of the sky opening, of a profound change in the atmosphere.

JUSTINE: The clouds are parting...

EMMA [trying to get back to normality]: The rain must be stopping -

JUSTINE: No. Look at it. Look at it, Emma.

F/X: The sky has well and truly opened, and the echo rings out across the landscape. Note that the sound isn't *positively* supernatural, so from Emma's point of view it could just be part of the storm.

EMMA: It's just the sky. It's just the sun.

JUSTINE: You can't see it?

EMMA [getting really upset now]: See what?

JUSTINE: The face.

EMMA: There's no face! It's just the sky!

F/X: Now we hear a voice from up above, much the same as the voices which have already "leaked" into the past from the prison scenes. This time the voice is female, although the usual distortion and lack of volume prevent us from making out the details.

JUSTINE: She's talking. She's... oh.

EMMA [upset]: I'm going on. I'm going on without you. I don't know what I'm supposed to say...

F/X: A series of heavy impacts in the sky, like several peals of thunder in rapid succession. And then, for the first time, a voice resolves itself from up above. Not only can we make out who it is, we can also hear exactly what she's saying, and it's not particularly loud but it *does* have an echo which makes it sound like the Voice of God. (In fact all the lines from the Voice of God are extracts from the previous scene, so they're going to have to be patched in during post-production.)

SHUNCUCKER [Voice of God]: Hello!

F/X: More of the heavy impacts from up above. We realise that it's actually just the sound of Shuncucker banging on the lid of Justine's casket, but amplified across the sky.

JUSTINE [bewildered, but not raising her voice]: Hello...?

SHUNCUCKER [Voice of God]: Did you hear what I said?

JUSTINE: No. No, I didn't hear...

EMMA: Justine, stop it!

SHUNCUCKER [Voice of God]: I said, you're too skinny!

JUSTINE [confused]: Too skinny...?

SHUNCUCKER [Voice of God]: Much too skinny! You should eat something.

EMMA: Who do you think you're talking to???

JUSTINE: She says I'm too skinny...

EMMA: *Who* does?

JUSTINE: She's... beautiful.

SHUNCUCKER [Voice of God]: Justine, is that your name? Listen. I know this is going to be a shock to you, but apparently you're important.

JUSTINE: I am?

SHUNCUCKER [Voice of God]: That's why we're going to let you out. **[Voice starts fading.]** You understand? Out!

JUSTINE: Out of where?

F/X: But Shuncucker's voice has faded away. There's the same sound we heard when the sky first opened, as if it's now closing up again.

EMMA [moving away]: Justine, I'm sorry. I don't know what to do. I think you're going mad, and you're scaring me, and... I don't understand.

JUSTINE: No, come back! Please!

EMMA: I can't -

JUSTINE: Come back! Tell me what you meant!

EMMA: I didn't mean anything. I -

JUSTINE: Out of where? Out of this town? Is that what you mean?

EMMA [realising]: You're not talking to me at all, are you?

JUSTINE: What? [**Back to reality.**] Emma... you don't understand. It was...

F/X: Now the sky's closed, the normal rumbling of the storm begins again. For a moment there's silence between the girls, filled only by the sound of the rain.

JUSTINE: ...she was beautiful.

F/X: A pause. Then a wet impact on the ground, much as when Justine slipped. The sound of someone fainting in the rain.

EMMA [barely more than a squeak]: Justine...?

F/X: No response but the rumbling of thunder.

Fade.

F/X: The assembly area. There's still a lot of activity here, but it's a hushed mumbling now, as if the inmates are waiting for something to happen. Over the noise we might *just* be able to hear the sound of a trolley being pushed into the foreground.

DEMETRA: I'd appreciate it if you'd stand clear.

F/X: The "closest" of the inmates fade a little, as if they're getting out of our way. The trolley becomes more audible just before it comes to a halt.

DEMETRA: How's Mandeema?

SELVYNKESH: She was wounded. I'm not sure how badly. She's already got so many holes in her body...

DEMETRA: Our family doesn't like to employ people who die easily.

SELVYNKESH: We were nearly killed. The bomb -

DEMETRA: This facility's built on a... what do you people call it? "Cross-dimensional infrastructure", is that it? It's what cuts this place off from the rest of the universe.

SELVYNKESH: Yes, but -

DEMETRA: You see? We do our research. The grenade damaged the framework. Made a hole in your nice clean prison. This is the casket?

SELVYNKESH: It's the one you wanted. It's her.

DEMETRA: Bring it over here. Please.

F/X: The trolley's pushed forward a little. By now the noise of the inmates has settled down to a vague mutter.

SELVYNKESH: Cousin Justine.

DEMETRA: You're sure she's the one? The one who's carrying the shadow?

SELVYNKESH: That's what it said on the manifest. [Awkward pause.] Is there something wrong?

DEMETRA: She didn't used to look like this.

SELVYNKESH: You know her?

DEMETRA: I knew the woman who used to have the shadow. We met. Just the once.

SELVYNKESH: Can't it be passed on to other people? Maybe the Cousin's just the latest one to have it...

DEMETRA: She must be. You know, it's... almost disappointing. **[Addressing the others.]** Is everybody armed?

F/X: A muted response from the army of convicts. Various uncertain mumbling noises.

DEMETRA: Good. I want everyone at their stations, and nobody move unless I say otherwise. The House Military's on its way.

F/X: This arouses more interest. Suddenly the area's alive with activity again as the inmates panic. There might even be some running sounds as they scramble to get ready.

SELVYNKESH [quietly]: Miss Kine... is that true?

DEMETRA: It will be soon. Mandeema? Can you walk?

MANDEEMA [coming into the foreground]: Rngrnh.

DEMETRA: You're a good soldier. I want you to take the casket, go to the outrigger platform, and let the First Ordinary here open up a channel out of here.

MANDEEMA: Nrh?

DEMETRA: No. If I leave here now, it might look... suspicious. I'll join you once we're ready to go.

SELVYNKESH: Then we're leaving?

DEMETRA: We're leaving. You, me and Cousin Justine here.

SELVYNKESH: But not the other inmates?

DEMETRA: They've got grudges to bear. They just want a chance to fight the Houses.

SELVYNKESH: There'll be a massacre.

DEMETRA: It's possible.

SELVYNKESH [realising]: And it'll cover your escape.

DEMETRA: That's possible too. We'll see.

Fade.

F/X: Another corridor in the prison facility, but the background noise isn't quite like anything we've heard so far. It's deeper, and the pulsing's slower, giving the scene a darker kind of atmosphere. We're in the spooky basement area, basically.

SHUNCUCKER [regaining consciousness]: *Rrrrrrr.*

F/X: Shuffling noises as Shuncucker gets to her feet. We might also be able to hear Veeble getting up in the background.

SHUNCUCKER [even groggier than usual]: What happened to the red lighting? I was just getting used to that. Made me want to kill something.

VEEBLE: So... now it's dark, you don't want to kill anything any more?

SHUNCUCKER: Don't be stupid. Are you going to tell me where we are, or not?

F/X: Pause as Veeble takes stock. Nothing but the slow throbbing.

VEEBLE: We're in the labyrinth.

SHUNCUCKER: Not good enough.

VEEBLE: It's the infrastructure of the prison. It's underneath the cells. Well... not really underneath. Kind of... behind. Or in the same place, but... off to an angle outside normal-space.

SHUNCUCKER: Still not good enough. No, come to think of it... that was *worse* than before. What are you talking about?

VEEBLE: I'm trying to explain. The grenade must have blown a hole in the cross-dimensional... **[forgetting the word]** ...everything.

SHUNCUCKER: So we're in a hole.

VEEBLE: I'm just trying to warn you. This place isn't normal. These tunnels don't work the way they're supposed to, all the dimensions are messed up.

F/X: Shuncucker's footsteps, as she moves away from Veeble. The floor here sounds a lot more metallic than in the other parts of the prison, as if it's covered in a grating.

SHUNCUCKER [moving into the background]: "Warn" me. D'you know who I am?

VEEBLE: Yeah, you mentioned it.

SHUNCUCKER: Shuncucker. Last scion of the Faction Homeworld, bastard offspring of the Grandfather's eighth-and-a-half Lieutenant, killer

of... all those things I said earlier. And I told you to stop looking me like that.

VEEBLE [more to himself than anyone]: We must be near storage...

F/X: Shuncucker's footsteps stop.

SHUNCUCKER: Near the what?

VEEBLE: Storage. Where the prisoner supplementals are kept.

SHUNCUCKER: Supplementals?

VEEBLE: You know. Personal possessions. Stuff that gets picked up at the same time as the prisoners. It's all kept in the galleries just under the control core -

SHUNCUCKER: Weapons? Armour?

VEEBLE: Well... yeah. Everything gets put down here. There's a secure-information dump around here somewhere.

F/X: Running footsteps. Shuncucker hurrying back to Veeble, as if to grab him by his lapels.

VEEBLE: *Whuh.*

SHUNCUCKER [now in the foreground again]: Listen to me. When I came here, I had a mask. Made of bone. Had stripes. Looked great. And a suit of armour.

VEEBLE: You need armour...?

SHUNCUCKER: Of course I don't need armour, I'm indestructible. But it's *my* armour. Where is it?

VEEBLE: If you had it when you were brought here, then... it'll be in the storage cells, yeah.

SHUNCUCKER: Near here?

VEEBLE: I suppose. But there's no point -

SHUNCUCKER: You *do* want me to get rid of this Kine person, don't you? You *do* want me to kill every single escaped inmate in this whole poxy facility?

VEEBLE: Er... that's not exactly what I -

SHUNCUCKER: Well, I'm not doing it until I'm dressed. So shut up and follow me. All right?

F/X: Shuncucker stomps away. It doesn't take her long to stop.

SHUNCUCKER: Which way am I going, again?

VEEBLE: We could try *that* way...

SHUNCUCKER: That's what I thought.

F/X: Shuncucker heads off. Veeble hurries after her. Their next couple of lines start to fade as they leave the area.

VEEBLE: What about the Cousin?

SHUNCUCKER: What about her?

F/X: They move out of range as we...

Fade.

F/X: Rain. The sound of a real storm, so we know we're back in Justine's past. This time the sound of the rain is quieter, the acoustics suggesting that we're indoors. This is confirmed when we hear the sound of knocking from the other side of a wooden door.

FIORA [in the background]: I'm coming.

F/X: If we can hear any footsteps in here, then Fiora is crossing the room to get to the door. There's some more hurried knocking in the meantime.

FIORA [to herself]: Give me time...

F/X: Fiora reaches the door, and opens it (oh, go on, make it creak). The sound of rain becomes louder as the room's opened to the elements.

FIORA: Hello...?

EMMA [trying to be respectful]: Aunt Fiora.

FIORA: Emma! And... your friend?

EMMA: This is Justine. My cousin?

FIORA: Oh! Of course. Jake's girl. Haven't seen her in... must be nearly two years, now. **[Finally noticing.]** Is there something wrong? You look...

EMMA: I hurt my leg. But Justine's... I don't know. I think she's sick.

FIORA: You're soaking wet. Come in, come in.

F/X: The girls shuffle into the house. Fiora closes the door behind them, and the rain drops in volume. It stays low throughout this scene, with less rumbling than before.

JUSTINE [sounds like she's half-conscious]: Uhhhr...

FIORA: Looks to me like she needs tea. Maybe with a little something in it. Is she used to whiskey?

JUSTINE [recovering, but still mumbling]: It... smells.

FIORA: I'm sorry, dear?

JUSTINE: This house... smells...

EMMA [apologetic]: She's not herself right now -

FIORA: That's history, dear.

JUSTINE [starting to recover]: History...?

FIORA: Forty-one years of it. Never throw anything away, that's what I say. Sit down, sit down. You look as dead as a pair of dodos.

F/X: Various shifting sounds as the girls get settled. Throughout this next scene Aunt Fiora moves into the background and starts making tea, thus producing various small and irrelevant noises (this being a time before everyone depended on electricity, the procedure's quite complicated).

JUSTINE [getting her senses back]: I'm sorry. Your voice...

FIORA: The canker, love. My throat's not long for the world now.

JUSTINE: Oh. I'm sorry, I didn't -

FIORA: Oh, I'm used to it. Same thing that took my Lookie in '91. All that's important is to enjoy the time you've got left, isn't that right?

EMMA [pointedly]: So I've heard.

FIORA [even more pointedly]: Did you say something, Emma?

EMMA [changing the subject]: Justine thought she saw something. Out in the Fields.

JUSTINE: She was in the sky. Her face.

FIORA: I beg your pardon?

EMMA: It's not important. She was just seeing things, that's all. In the clouds.

FIORA: Well, we all do that, don't we? I wish Lookie was here. *He* could tell you a thing or two about the weather.

JUSTINE: Lookie?

EMMA: She means Uncle Tuluku.

JUSTINE: Your... husband? [**Bit nervous about this topic.**]

FIORA: You don't need to say it *quite* that way, dear.

JUSTINE: I'm sorry. It's just... he was a... a man of colour?

EMMA [under her breath, in a "don't get her started on this" way]: Justine...

FIORA: That's what they say. Reverend Bell said he was a Negro. 'I'm not marrying you to that *Negro*', he said. He doesn't get any more civil with age, either, that man. [**N.B. She's still busy with the kettle here.**] No, Lookie wasn't a Negro. Skin like cream, he had. Well... cream with a little something in it. His family came from an island off in the Pacific Ocean. Me and Emma's father, we never *could* say the name of the place properly.

JUSTINE [quite interested]: The Pacific?

FIORA: Halfway to the other side of the world. Halfway as far as you can go.

JUSTINE: I've read Captain Cook...

FIORA: Oh, well. Lookie's family probably knew him. They came over here in the seventeen-hundreds. Foreigners were fashionable, in those days. Long as they wore bones in their ears and didn't complain about the food.

JUSTINE: *I* would have liked to have lived in the seventeen-hundreds. I like the clothes.

EMMA: They wouldn't have let you wear black all the time. **[To Fiora.]** We shouldn't stay long. I think Justine must have just got a bit upset

-

JUSTINE: No, I... **[deflating]** ...maybe. I thought I understood, for a moment. Just before I saw the face.

FIORA: It wasn't the face of God, was it, love? We've got a history of seeing God, in our family. A regular bunch of Joan of Arcs, we are.

JUSTINE: No. It was a woman. She was beautiful.

FIORA: Your father brought you up on the Catholic side, didn't he?

JUSTINE [cautiously]: In a fashion. Why do you ask?

FIORA: Well, you know what Catholics are like. Oh... no offence, dear. But he must have told you all those stories about the Holy Virgin.

JUSTINE: It wasn't like that. I just felt... it was as if I was supposed to *be* like her. I can't explain it properly. I thought I knew what it meant...

FIORA: It's all right, dear. Don't upset yourself. You had a nasty vision, that's all. It's like I said, it's a pity my Lookie couldn't be here now. He'd probably say it was your spirit-guide. Mind you, that's another thing the Reverend couldn't stand about him.

EMMA [embarrassed]: Aunt Fiora...

JUSTINE: Spirit-guide?

FIORA: Oh, you know. Your totem. Or your guardian angel. One of those.

EMMA: Uncle Tuluku thought everyone had an invisible animal.

FIORA: Not always an animal. Humans sometimes. He taught me how to read people, before he left us. He used to say I could always go into fortune-telling once he wasn't around. I'm tempted, sometimes.

EMMA: That's not true. Aunt Fiora can't really read people. Not like Uncle Tuluku did.

FIORA: I told you what *your* totem was.

EMMA: No you didn't! You told me I was a rabbit.

FIORA: Well, that's what you were. And Lookie thought so too.

EMMA: That's ridiculous. I'm obviously a horse. I'm a handsome white mare, you can tell just by looking at me.

FIORA [humouring her]: Oh, if you insist. You were a horse.

JUSTINE: But he definitely said there were things watching us? Trying to guide us?

FIONA: Well, he said a lot of things. Although if you ask me, it's just the way we are. Our family's always had a habit of being in the right place at the right time. That's how me and Tuluku found each other in the first place.

EMMA: I'm sure we're much better at being in the *wrong* place at the *wrong* time.

F/X: The complex tea-making process has ended by now.

FIORA: Are you all right, dear? You look like you're a million miles away.

JUSTINE: I'm... not sure I'm here.

EMMA: Oh, no. Not again.

JUSTINE: Mrs. Venn. You said you could read people, was that it?

FIORA: Oh, now! You're going to ask me to do my party-trick, aren't you?

JUSTINE: I can't explain. All day, it's been as if I'm standing at... at a crossroads. Or a junction. And if something's trying to tell me...

FIORA: Ahh. It sounds to me like somebody wants to be the centre of attention.

JUSTINE: But you *did* say that everyone's got one of these guides? One of these spirits?

FIORA: Well. That's what Lookie taught me, anyway. 'We're all half-man and half-beast,' that's what he said. But I'm sure I'm going to be disappointed, when I die. I'm sure I'm going to get up to Heaven and find out that we were all just people after all.

JUSTINE: Then you *can* read me?

EMMA: Justine... please don't.

JUSTINE: Why not?

EMMA: Because it's embarrassing.

FIORA: Oh, nonsense. It's just a bit of fun. It's quite exotic, really, isn't it Justine?

JUSTINE: What do I have to do?

FIORA: Give me your hand.

JUSTINE: That's all?

FIORA: Well... it'll take a little concentration from me.

EMMA: You mean, you need time to make something up.

FIORA: Concentration, Emma, dear. Not something you know a great deal about. Justine? Are you ready?

JUSTINE: Yes. I'm ready.

F/X: Bring up the background noise of the rain, and...

Fade into...

F/X: Outside the house. We're back with the horses, and they're not moving apart from the occasional restless hoof. Possibly another ominous rumble in the air.

SABBATH: Did you see it?

MORLOCK: Well, I certainly felt it.

SABBATH: And?

MORLOCK: Temporal dysfunction, lasting fifty-six seconds with a ground-level tachyonic impact area of 2,460 square feet. I'm estimating, of course.

SABBATH: "Feet"?

MORLOCK: We're in a time of empire. We may as well speak the imperial tongue.

SABBATH [losing his patience]: What *caused* it, Morlock? Was it us? Something to do with us being here?

MORLOCK: Possibly. Then again, it *did* seem to be focused on one of those girls.

SABBATH: Bystanders. Irrelevant.

MORLOCK: For now, yes. Maybe something we're about to do is going to alter the balance.

SABBATH [suspicious]: What are you saying?

MORLOCK: Oh, nothing complicated. A self-reliant four-dimensional metastructure. Fiddly, but quite rudimentary.

SABBATH: It could be her. The one we're looking for.

MORLOCK: The girls headed straight for one of the houses, I see. The one on the far side of the trees.

SABBATH: You think that could be it? Where the woman lives?

MORLOCK: It's your hunt, Godfather. Of course, there's always a chance that we've missed our window of opportunity. Particularly after that unfortunate diversion during the *last* bleeding.

F/X: Sabbath tugs at his reigns, and the horse makes a disgruntled snorting noise, preparing itself to move.

SABBATH: Let's just get on with it.

F/X: The horse begins to trot away. We can assume that Morlock watches it go.

MORLOCK [to himself]: Poor woman. She could have hoped for a more *civilised* hunting-party.

Fade into...

F/X: Back inside the house. Nobody's moving, so all's quiet except the weather outside. Tense silence as Fiora concentrates on Justine.

JUSTINE: Can you feel anything...?

FIORA: Shh. Give me time, love.

EMMA: I bet she's a fish.

JUSTINE: Emma!

EMMA: She's just like a fish. I've seen her scales.

FIORA: I'm sure she's not a fish, Emma. I'm sure she's something perfectly - **[She breaks off in mid-sentence. Startled.]** - well now.

JUSTINE: Is something wrong?

FIORA: Your totem. It's... **[Doesn't know quite what to say.]**

EMMA: It's a big trout, isn't it?

FIORA: I... can't say.

JUSTINE: You can't?

EMMA: Are you doing it right?

JUSTINE: Perhaps I don't *have* a totem.

FIORA: No, you've got one. I can see it.

EMMA [groans]: *More* seeing things.

JUSTINE: Then why...?

FIORA: It hasn't been born.

JUSTINE: I'm sorry?

FIORA: Your totem. It's an animal that hasn't been born yet.

JUSTINE [after a perplexed silence all round]: I don't understand.

FIORA: Well, neither do I, dear. But there's not a lot I can do about it.

EMMA: I bet you're doing it wrong.

JUSTINE: Please... try again. Take my hand again.

FIORA: It's no good, Justine, love. I'm not going to see anything different.

JUSTINE [too hurriedly]: Please.

EMMA: It's not *real*, Justine. It's just a party trick.

JUSTINE [some desperation here]: You don't understand. I can feel it. I can feel there's... *something*.

FIORA: Now, you're taking this much too seriously, dear. I know you've had a nasty turn -

JUSTINE [more desperate, even aggressive]: Try again.

EMMA: Justine!

JUSTINE: Try again!

FIORA: Please, dear, just sit down -

JUSTINE: *Take my hand!*

F/X: Something's clearly not right here. To hell with it, let's underline this point with one last ominous rumble from outside.

FIORA: You're not well, dear. You need rest...

EMMA: Justine. Let go of her hand.

FIORA [small gasp as she tries to pull away]: Nnh...

EMMA: Justine...

FIORA [in pain]: *Ah!*

EMMA: Aunt Fiora -

FIORA [starting to panic]: Let go, dear. Please, you're hurting me -

JUSTINE: I can *feel* it...

EMMA: She's mad. I told you she was mad.

JUSTINE: It's here. Now. It's happening.

F/X: ...and then there's a wooden *thump*, as Justine falls to the floor. We'd assume she's fainted, if it weren't for the fact that there are other, smaller, thumping sounds after she falls. It sounds as if her limbs are twitching, bumping against the floorboards. Or, to put it bluntly...

EMMA: She's having a fit!

FIORA: We should hold her down. She might choke...

JUSTINE [only just able to speak]: I'm... in my coffin...

FIORA: No, love. No, you're here. You're alive...

JUSTINE: Weapon...

EMMA: She wants to kill us!

JUSTINE: Wake her up... use the weapon... have to tell *her* to use the weapon...

FIORA: Tell who?

JUSTINE: Tell *me*. In my coffin. To wake up...

F/X: The thumping sounds get worse. Emma and Fiora are trying to keep her restrained, but she's kicking out with her legs. Maybe the sound of

a table being knocked over? Something to suggest that the fit's getting worse?

FIORA: She's ranting...

EMMA: We need a doctor.

JUSTINE: Have to wake up now. Have to wake up.

FIORA: You're awake, dear. You're just upset -

JUSTINE: Use the weapon. Wake up. Wake up.

F/X: Throughout the last line, the distortion effect starts to kick in as Justine begins to come out of the dream-state. By the time she speaks again, her voice has become an echoing, over-extended scream.

EMMA: I can't hold her -

JUSTINE: *Wake up!*

F/X: All background noise abruptly ends as Justine delivers this final line, so only the aftershock of her voice is left.

Fade.

F/X: Prison corridor background. No water here. Two pairs of footsteps enter, then come to a stop.

MANDEEMA: Nrh rhgr?

SELVYNKESH: Yes. It's the hatchway to the outrigger platform. **[Less certain.]** If that's what you were asking.

F/X: The sound of someone tapping keys on a keypad, as in scene A2. It continues throughout the next exchange, suggesting that someone's typing complicated instructions into a machine.

MANDEEMA: Rhgr?

SELVYNKESH: We need to open a channel before we go out onto the platform. To set up a link to the Homeworld.

MANDEEMA [unhappy about this]: Nnrhgrhr?

F/X: The tapping stops.

SELVYNKESH: The Homeworld. The Homeworld of the Great Houses. I know it's not where you want to go, but -

MANDEEMA: Rhgr!

SELVYNKESH: - but it's the only way out of the facility. I can't open a channel to anywhere else.

F/X: A brief scuffle. Mandeema's grabbing Selvynkesh by his throat.

MANDEEMA: Rngrnh!

SELVYNKESH [choking]: Please... I'm telling the truth...

F/X: Just as Selvynkesh is about to asphyxiate, there's the sound of the tattoo coming to life on Selvynkesh's arm.

TATTOO: It's all right, Mandeema.

F/X: A tense pause, then a *plop* as Mandeema lets Selvynkesh drop to the floor.

MANDEEMA [grumbling]: Grnrhnr.

TATTOO: What my associate's trying to say, First Ordinary... is that she doesn't think it'd be a wise move for us to go straight from a maximum security containment facility to a place that's right under your people's noses.

SELVYNKESH: It's the only way out. I'm sorry. I know it's a risk, but once you get to the Homeworld you can -

TATTOO: Don't worry about it. Just open the channel.

MANDEEMA [protests]: Nnrhgrhr!

TATTOO: Everything's been arranged. You can trust me.

SELVYNKESH: I don't understand...

TATTOO: Well, that's the great thing about trust. You don't *need* to understand.

F/X: Another squishing noise, as the tattoo retracts into Selvynkesh's skin. Everything goes quiet.

SELVYNKESH: What did she mean, "everything's been arranged"?

F/X: In the background - so it only just registers on the edge of our hearing - there's a vague cracking sound, like ice slowly breaking. In fact it's a lot like the noise we heard when Shuncucker broke out of her casket, although here there's just one brief crack before everything goes quiet again.

MANDEEMA: Nrh rngrnh!

SELVYNKESH: I'm sorry?

MANDEEMA: Rngrnh!

SELVYNKESH: The casket...?

F/X: The cracking sound again. This time it's a little louder, and goes on for longer, as if several cracks are opening up in the casket at once. It's not loud enough to be alarming... yet.

SELVYNKESH: Oh. It's just the valves in the machinery. They leak, sometimes. It makes all sorts of noise.

F/X: And the cracking begins again. This time it doesn't stop, and even though it's not particularly loud there's something ominous about it, the sense that it's just building up to a big finish. It keeps building throughout the next few lines.

MANDEEMA: Nnrhgrhr!

SELVYNKESH: It's all right. The Cousin's locked in a different time-frame. She can't break out of it unless we start the disinterment sequence.

MANDEEMA: Rh?

SELVYNKESH: No, really. It's just not possible.

F/X: The casket cracks open with one great big dynamic splintering noise, as if pieces of it are exploding everywhere. But there's the sound of a shadow-weapon at the same time, so it gives us the impression that something's smashed its way out of the coffin. It's one big peak of noise, ending the scene and giving us a quick transition into...

F/X: Labyrinth background. There's a moment or two of calm, before the scene's interrupted by the sound of Shuncucker's shadow-lance tearing through metal.

SHUNCUCKER: Look at that.

F/X: A brief scrabbling noise, like a handful of random objects being dumped onto the floor. (It's actually Shuncucker emptying all the contents out of a locker, as we'll soon see.)

SHUNCUCKER: Load of rubbish. Why do people bring stuff like this with them to prison? Haven't they got any taste?

VEEBLE: How much longer are you going to open those things?

SHUNCUCKER: Until I find my mask. I'm not going anywhere without my mask.

VEEBLE: There are sixteen-thousand prisoners in here. That's sixteen-thousand storage cells. We could be here for days.

SHUNCUCKER: You're forgetting one thing.

VEEBLE: What?

SHUNCUCKER: My razor-sharp superhuman instincts. **[N.B. She sounds as pissed as ever, certainly *not* razor-sharp.]**

VEEBLE: That's the fiftieth cell you've looked in.

F/X: The shadow-lance slices through metal again, exactly as before. Another locker being opened.

SHUNCUCKER: *Ha-hah!*

VEEBLE: Lucky guess.

SHUNCUCKER: Razor-sharp. Superhuman. Instincts.

F/X: Shuncucker puts on her mask. (Would it be feasible to have some kind of F/X on her voice from this point on, to suggest that she's wearing it? Or would that be too intrusive?)

SHUNCUCKER: There. How do I look?

VEEBLE: Well, you look... **[Bit stuck for words. He clearly doesn't want to answer this question.]**

SHUNCUCKER: Are you just going to stand there, or are you going to help me with this body armour?

VEEBLE: Oh. Right.

F/X: The sounds of various clasps and straps being put into place. Shuncucker putting on the armour.

VEEBLE: That's not a *normal* Faction mask, is it?

SHUNCUCKER: Pff. What do I look like, a fashion victim? You think I'm going to walk around with a bat's skull strapped to my face?

VEEBLE: I thought it was traditional.

SHUNCUCKER: Dying of natural causes, *that's* traditional. Doesn't mean I'd be seen dead doing it. Ow!

VEEBLE: Sorry. So... it's not made of bone, then?

SHUNCUCKER: Of course it's made of bone. It's all made of bone. See this? Ripped the spinal column out of a... what's the biggest thing you can think of?

VEEBLE: Um... the universe?

SHUNCUCKER: Don't be stupid. Biggest *living* thing. I'm not going to rip the spine out of the universe, am I?

VEEBLE: Oh. Er... oh, I know. Leviathans.

F/X: Shuncucker finishes putting on the armour.

SHUNCUCKER: That's it. One of those. Ripped the spine out of a Leviathan. Carved it into the shape of a mask. Painted it up with the blood of a... what are those things called?

VEEBLE: What things?

SHUNCUCKER: The *second* biggest things you can think of.

VEEBLE: You look like a zebra.

SHUNCUCKER: Good. What's a zebra?

F/X: At this point there's a sound from somewhere beyond the scene, a brief, far-away clattering on the metal floor. Something moving, a long way up the labyrinth passage.

VEEBLE: What was that?

SHUNCUCKER: What was what?

F/X: More noises. Probably footsteps. Audible, but some distance away.

VEEBLE: Something's down here with us.

SHUNCUCKER: More criminals. Good.

F/X: Shuncucker drops her shadow-weapon. It's a sound we haven't heard since the start of Volume Two.

VEEBLE: What are you doing?

SHUNCUCKER: Changing weapons.

VEEBLE: What was wrong with the old one?

SHUNCUCKER: Bored of it.

VEEBLE: I thought you said it did everything?

SHUNCUCKER: It did. That's why it was boring.

F/X: Shuncucker swooshes her new shadow-weapon through the air. It sounds like a sword, like Justine's standard-issue weapon, although it might possibly be a slightly different pitch (for clarity later on).

SHUNCUCKER: Let's see the bastards give me flesh wounds now I'm wearing sixty pounds of Leviathan spine.

VEEBLE: It might not be inmates.

SHUNCUCKER: Why? Who else is it going to be?

VEEBLE: There's *things* down here. I told you. There's a secure information dump somewhere in the infrastructure.

SHUNCUCKER: You say "infrastructure" one more time and I'll gut you.

VEEBLE: It's protected, that's all.

SHUNCUCKER: By what?

VEEBLE: I don't know, I've never been there. It's just -

F/X: From up the corridor, the clattering sounds get louder. It's definitely footsteps. Moving slowly, but coming this way.

VEEBLE: It's getting closer.

SHUNCUCKER: Of course it's getting closer. **[Shouting.]** Come on then, if you're coming!

VEEBLE: Shuncucker, don't -

SHUNCUCKER [still shouting]: D'you know who you're dealing with here? D'you know what you're up against? I'll tell you. Nobody else has got what I've got, nobody else can do what I do, and nobody ever looks at me in a funny way twice. Understand?

F/X: The steps get closer. And closer. A single pair of feet on metal, walking with a measured rhythm. Clearly not put off by Shuncucker's performance.

VEEBLE: You don't know what it is.

SHUNCUCKER: I don't *care* what it is. [**Shouting again, and working up to a climax.**] Kresta Ve Coglana Shuncucker. Last scion of the Faction homeworld. Bastard offspring of all the Grandfather's lieutenants at once. Defender of the faith. Killer of everyone in the whole universe she doesn't like the look of. I'm the salvation of my people, I broke out of the highest-security prison there is without even trying and now I look bloody fantastic as well. I'm Faction Paradox. You understand me? *I'm Faction Paradox.*

F/X: The footsteps get so close that whatever's causing them has *got* to be visible by now. Then they stop dead, presumably as Shuncucker and the new arrival come face-to-face.

JUSTINE: That would seem to make two of us.

F/X: There's the sudden, violent sound of a shadow-weapon slicing through the air. It seems to go right past our ears, so loud and so aggressive that we can't even tell *whose* shadow weapon it might be. It's a sound that marks the sound marks the...

End of Volume Five.